

Maisters.

conceiue. Then when she heard that the Emperour had a Son with seauen wise Maisters to be fostered and taught to the behoofe and profite of the Empire, shee thought in her selfe, and wilbed his death. And from that houre forth, shee imagined how she might conspire his destruction. It happened on a night as the Emperour lay in his bed, he said to the Emperesse: My most deere & best beloued wife, I shall now shew & open to you the secrets of my heart, for vnder the Sun is ther no creature that I loue so well as you, and therefore trust in my loue. Then said the saire noble Emperesse, if it be so as you say, I require of you one little boone or petition. Desire what you will sayde the Emperour, and all that to me is possible, I shall fulfill and giue it to you. Then sayd the Emperesse, my right deere Lord, as you know I haue no child by you yet conceiued, wherefore I am sore pensine

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pensive and heauie, but it is shewed  
me that ye haue one Sonne only, the  
which is set to the Seven wise Ma-  
sters to be taught and gouerned, and  
him hold I and repute for mine owne  
Sonne, wherfore I beseech you that  
ye will send for him that I may see  
him and haue consolation of his pre-  
sence, as though he were mine owne.  
Hereupon answered the Emperour  
it is sixteene yeeres past since that I  
saw him, your will be fulfilled. In-  
continent the Emperour sent vnto the  
seven Masters a Letter sealed with  
his secret signet, that vpon paine of  
death they should bring his Sonne  
in the feast of Pentecost or Whitson-  
tide then next following.

How the Seven wise Masters after the  
sight of the Emperours letter, wold first  
see the course of the Firmament and  
Planets, whether it were good to obey  
his commaundement, or not.

And



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And as the Maisters the letter had read, and had vnderstood the will of the Emperour ; in the night they went and beheld the starres of the firmament, whether it should be expedient to take their iourney with y<sup>e</sup> Child after the Emperours will, or not : and they sawe clearly in the Starres, that if they should leade the Childe in that time assigned. At the first word that he should speake he should die an euill Death : wherefore they were all right sorrye, and as they beheld another Starre, they sawe, that if they deliuered not the Childe at the day aforesayd, they should loose their heads. Then said one of them, of two evils the least is to be chosen; it is better that all wee die, than that the Child should loose his life, therefore that we may saue the childes life, let vs go to the Emperour. And as they were thus sorrowfull, the Child came downe from the

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Chamber, and seeing his Masters so heauy, he demaunded then the cause of their heauinesse; whereupon they answered: Sir, we haue receued your Fathers Letters, vpon pain of death that now in this high feast of Pen- thecost wee should leade you to your Countrey, wherupon we haue behol- den the firmament, wherin we clere- ly see and finde, that if we within the time before prefixed present you to your Father, At the first word that ye shall pronounce out of your mouth, ye shall bee to the most vilest death con- demned. Then said the Child, I must also behold the firmament with the Stars, and so he did, and found clere in a little starre, that if hee could ab- staine from speaking seauen days, he should be preserved, and saue his life. And after he had seene this, he called his Masters, and shewed them the Star, and sayd, behold my deere mas- ters, I see perfectly in the starre th

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if I abstaine my selfe by the space of  
vii. Dayes I shall laue my life. We are  
now vii. Maisters the wisest of all the  
world, it is a little thing to you, that  
euery of you for mee one Day doe an-  
swere, and with your wise answere,  
euery of you his Day my life may saue  
and keep, & I in the 8. Day shall speak  
for my selfe, and shall saue my life, and  
all you from perill. As the Mai-  
sters had beholden that certen starre,  
they iudged in them, that the Child  
had sayd troth, saying, almighty God  
bee thanked, that the wisdom and  
cunning of our Disciple exceedeth vs  
all. Then said the first Maister Pan-  
tillas, Lord I shall speake for you the  
first day and saue your life. And Len-  
tulus the second Maister said, I shall  
for you the second day answere: and  
so consequently euery of them promi-  
sed to answere for him his day. And  
this sayd, they cloathed the Child in  
purple, & leapt to horsebacke with a

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faire companie, and hastened them both  
the Child to the Emperour.

How the Emperour rode to meete his  
Sonne comming from his Study, with  
pompe and pride.

**W**hen the Emperoz perceiued that  
his Sonne was comming vppon  
the way, hee rode with great ioy to  
meet him. The Masters vnderstan-  
ding the comming of the Emperour,  
said vnto the Child, it is best that we  
depart, that in the meane while wee  
may prouide howe wee maye saue  
your life. The Child said, it pleaseh  
me that you do so, but haue mind on  
mee in time of my necessitie : so they  
tooke their leaue, and departed to-  
wards the Cittie, and the Child came  
after accompanied most honourably.  
And as hee & his Father the Empe-  
rour were mette, for ioy and glad-  
nes he tooke him about the necke and  
killed him and said, my deer son, how  
is

is it with you, it is long since that I  
saw you, he bowed downe his head  
and answered nothing : the Father  
had great wonder why that he spake  
not, and thought in himselfe that his  
Maisters had him so informed, that  
he riding should not speak. And when  
they were come into y<sup>e</sup> Pallace, and  
were descended from their horses, y<sup>e</sup>  
Father tooke the Son by the hand,  
and led him into the Hall, and set him  
next him and beheld him, and sayd :  
tell me how it is with your Maisters,  
and how they haue informed you,  
for now are many yeeres past since I  
saw you : he enclyned down his head  
and gaue no answer : the Father  
sayd, wherefore speake ye not to me :  
And when the Emperesse heard that  
y<sup>e</sup> Emperors son was come, shee was  
right ioyous and glad, & sayd, I will  
goe see him : shee apparelled her with  
rich attyre, and tooke with her twoo  
of her Gentlewomen, & went there

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as the Emperour was sitting with his Sonne, and sate her down by the Child, and she sayd to the Emperour, is this your Son that hath been nourished with the seven wise Masters? and he sayd, it is my son but he speaketh not: she sayd, deliuer to mee your Sonne, and if euer he speake, I shall make him to speak: then said y<sup>e</sup> Emperour, rise and go with her: the Son did reuerence to the father, as though he sayd, I am ready to accomplish your will; and so went with her.

How the Empress led *Dioclesian* the Emperours Son with her into her chamber, for to make good cheere with him, the which he withstood.

**T**he Emperesse led him with her into her chamber, & commaunded all other to aboide, & set him by her afore her bed, and said, O my best beloued *Dioclesian*, I haue heard much of your person and beautie. but now I am glad that I may see that  
with

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with mine eyes that my heart coue-  
teth & loueth; for I haue caused your  
Father to send for you, that I might  
haue solace and ioy of your Person.  
Wherefore I without fault giue you  
knowledge, that I for your loue, vn-  
to this day haue kept my Virginitie?  
speake to mee, and let vs goe to bed  
together: but he gaue her no answer.  
She seeing that, sayd to him, O good  
Dioclesian, which hast the halfe of  
my soule, why speake you not to me,  
or at the least shew me some token of  
loue: what shall I doe, speake to me  
I am ready to fulfill and performe  
your wil: and when she had thus said  
she embraced him, and would haue  
kissed his mouth, and he turned his  
visage from her, and in no wise would  
consent: then said she againe to him,  
O Son wherefore doe ye thus with  
me, let vs sleep together, and then shal  
ye well perceiue, that for your loue I  
haue



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haue kept my Virginitie: and he turned his visage frō her. She seeing þ he was of her asbamed, shewed unto him her naked body and breasts, and said, Behold my Son, what body I haue, is at your wil, giue me your consent, or else it shall be hard for mee to Depart hence with my right mind: he neither with signe, nor with countenance of visage shewed her any manner of loue, but as much as hee could, withdrew himselfe from her. When shee saw that, shee sayd, O my most sweet Sonne, if it please not you to consent to me, ne yet speak, perhaps for some reasonable cause, lo heere is paper, pen, and inke, then write your will, whether I maye at anytime hereafter trust in your loue, or not. The Child wrote as hereafter followeth: O Lady, God forbid that I should defile my fathers Orchard, for I wote not what fruite I should haue of it, I knowe well one thing, that

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that I should sin in the sight of God,  
and also run in the malediction of my  
Father, and therefore from henceforth  
prouoke and stirre me no more there-  
to. When she had seen and read the  
writing, she tare it with her teeth,  
and rent her cloathes to her nauill,  
and all to scratched her Visage, vntill  
it was all bloudie, and cast from her  
all the ornaments of her head, and  
cryed with a loud voice, come hither  
my Lords and helpe mee, least that  
this rude and euill bodie shame and  
rauish mee.

How the Empresse complained to the  
Emperour, of the shame done to her  
by his Sonne.

**T**He Emperour was in the Hall,  
and hearing the noise and cry of  
the Empresse, he hastily ran to-  
ward his chamber with his Knights  
and other of his Seruants follow-  
ing him, for to see what was the  
matter. Then beganne the Em-  
press

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presse to cry, and to speak to the Em=  
perour in this case : O my Lord, haue  
pittie and compassion vpon mee, be=  
hold , this young man is not your  
Sonne, but the foulest Ribaud & har=  
lot that euer was borne, and a despy=  
ler of women : for as you know well,  
I led and brought him with me into  
my chamber, and would haue exhorted  
and caused him to haue spoken.  
I haue doone as much thereto as I  
can, or may; and whiles I with my  
wordes exhorted and moued him for  
to haue spoken, he hath endeauoured  
himselfe with me to haue sinned; and  
because I would not to him consent,  
but withstoode as much as I might  
for to sipe the shame, hee hath made  
my Visage all bloudy, and hath  
all to torne my Vesture, and Orna=  
ments of my head, as you may open=  
ly see, and if yee had not so soone  
come vnto my calling, he had accom=  
plished in mee his most foule and  
wicked

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wicked appetite. When the Empe-  
rour saw and heard this, filled with  
great malice and woodnesse, he com-  
maunded his Seruants that they  
should lead him to the Gallowes, and  
hang him. And when his Lords heard  
thereof, they sayd, Lord you haue no  
more but this Sonne onely, it is not  
good that yee thus lightly put him to  
death: the law is ordained for trans-  
gressors and misdoers, and if it be so  
that he must die, let him by the Law  
die, least that it be sayd, that the Em-  
perour in his great furie and yre,  
without Law and Justice, hath put  
his onely Sonne to Death. As the  
Emperour heard this, he commaun-  
ded him to be put in Prison vntill the  
time that Iudgement were giuen a-  
gainst him. And when the Em-  
presse vnderstoode that the Childe  
was not put to Death, shee cried and  
weeped bitterly, and would haue  
no rest: when the night was come,

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the Emperoz entred into the Chamber to go to bed, and found his wife weeping and sorowing, to whome he sayd: O my most deere Ladie, for what cause are ye sorowfull? Shee answered, know you not, how that your accursed Sonne hath done mee so much shame, & so dishonoured you, that ye haue commaunded him to bee hanged, and yet he liueth, and your word is not perfourmed, neither is my shame reuenged. To morow said the Emperoz he shall die by the law: then said shee, shall hee so long liue: then might it happen to you, as it did to a Burgesse of Roome, of whome an example is mentioned: the Emperoz sayd, I pray you shew me that example: that shall I do gladly sayde the Empresse.

The first Example of the  
Empresse.

**I**n the Cittie of Rome was a Burgesse, the which had a faire Gardaine

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Daine, wherein hee had standing a noble Tree, the which euerie yeare brought forth fruite of great vertue, for whosoever ate thereof that were sicke of any manner of sicknesse, as of Leprosie, or of any other, he should soon be whole and receiue his health. It happened vppon a day as the Burgesse went into his Gardaine to visite and see the Tree, hee espyed vnder the Tree a faire young Impe, and called to him the Gardiner, and sayd : My friend of this young impe I giue thee charge, for I trust of that to plant a better Tree than this is: y<sup>e</sup> Gardiner sayd, I shall it gladly doe. Another time the Burgesse came againe into his Gardaine to visite this young Plant, and it appeared vnto him that it grewe not so much as it should doe, and hee sayd vnto the Gardiner, how may this be? and he sayd, it is no woonder, for this great Tree hath so great armes & banches

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branches, that the ayre may not come to the roote of the yong Tree: then said the Burgesse, cut and hew off the armes and the boughes, that the aire may come thereto, the gardener did as hee was commaunded. The Burges came again at another time for to see this yong plant, and thought that it grew neuer the better, and said to the Gardener, what is it that letteth this Plant to growe now? And then he sayd, I suppose y height of the old tree letteth the sun, that the raine may not come thereto, and therefore it cannot grow. Then sayde the Maister vnto him, hewe downe the Tree by the ground, for I hope of this plant to haue a better than euer that was. The Gardener hearing his Maister, obeyed him, and hewed downe the Tree, and as soone as this was done, the yong Plant all wholly perished, and came to naught, whereof there came great harme,



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harne: for when the pooze and sicke people perceined that the Tree was so destroyed, they cursed all them that were Councellozs and helpers thereto, by the which they all afozetime were healed and cured of their infirmities and maledics. Then sayd the Emperesse vnderstād ye what I haue sayd? He answered, yea, right well: then said she, I shal declare to you the meaning of that which I haue sayd.

### The Declaration of the Example.

**T**His Tree, my Lord, betokeneth your most noble Person, how that with your counsell and helpe, many pooze and sicke folke are greatly holpen and comforted. And the young Impe which is growen vnder the great Tree, is your cursed Sonne, that now by his cunning beginneth to growe, and studieth how hee first may cut off the armes and boughs of your might, & how to win to him the  
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land and fauor of the people, yea and  
more vnnaturally, he imagineth to  
destroy your person, that he may him-  
selfe raigne, but what shall then ensue  
thereof? all pooze and feeble people  
shall curse all them, who might haue  
destroyed your Sonne, and haue  
not done it, therefore I counsell you  
whylest you are in your power, and  
liuing, that ye destroy him, least that  
the curse of the people fall vppon you.  
Then sayd the Emperour, yee haue  
giuen me good counsell, to morrow  
I shall condemne him to the most vi-  
lent death that can be thought. When  
the daye was come, the Emperour  
went and sate in iudgement and com-  
maunded his Seruants that they  
should lead his son to be hanged with  
trumpet sounding in token of death.  
And as the Emperours Son was led  
thzough the Cittie, the common peo-  
ple beganne to weepe and crye, Alas  
the onely Son of the Emperour is led  
towards

towards his death, and there withall  
came Pantillas the first Maister ry-  
ding vppon a Horse: when the Child  
sawe him, he bowed his head to him,  
as though hee had sayd, haue minde  
vpon me when you come befoze my  
Father, see how I am ledde towards  
the Gallowes: then the Maister said  
to the seruants, make no hast, for I  
hope by the grace of god this day to  
deliuer him from the death: then said  
all the people, O good Maister hast  
you to the Paiace, & saue your Dis-  
ciple: hee smote the horse with his  
spurstill he came to the Pallace, and  
kneeled befoze y<sup>e</sup> Emperour and did  
him reuerēce, To whome y<sup>e</sup> Emperoz  
sayd, it shall neuer bee to thee good,  
who answered, I haue deserued a  
better reward: the Emperour sayd  
there thou lvest, for I deliuered him to  
thee in all things well mannered, and  
now he is dumme, and that worse is,  
hee would haue oppressed my wife,

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therfore this day hee shall die, and ye  
all shall die a shamefull death. The  
Maister sayd, O Lord, as for your  
sonne, for so much as he speaketh not,  
the cause thereof God knoweth, and  
without cause it is not, as ye shall vn-  
derstand: and where you say that he  
would haue defiled your Empresse,  
I shall say to you of a troth, he hath  
beene in our companie by the space of  
16. yeres, and we neuer could perceiue  
such abuse by him. And therefore  
my deere Lord I shall shew you one  
thing, that if you put your Sonne to  
death for the wordes of your wife,  
it should happen to you worse than to  
a knight, the which killed his best  
Greyhound through the wordes of  
his wife, which saued his Son from  
the Death: then sayd the Emperour  
to the Maister, tell me that example.  
The Maister sayd, Lord that shall I  
not doe, for before I should make an  
end therof, your sonne might be dead,  
and

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and then in vaine and without fruite should I rehearse it : but if it please you this notable example to heare, call againe your Son till to morrow, and as ye thinke by reason, then doe with him your pleasure. As the Emperour heard that, anon he willed the Child to be called againe, and in the mean time he set him in prison whyles the Maister should finish his tale, and then hee began to say in this manner as followeth.

### The Example of the first Maister.

**T**Here was a valiant knight, which had one onely Son, as you haue, the which hee loued so much, that he ordained for his keeping three Nourishers : The first should giue him sucke and feede him, the second should wash him and keep him cleane, and the third should bring him to sleepe and rest. This knight had also a Greyhound and a Fabol-  
con,

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con, which he also loued right well, The Greyhound was so good, that he neuer ranne at any game, but hee tooke it, and held it till his Maister came. And if his Maister disposed him to go vnto a battaile, if he should not speed in the Battaille, anon as he should amount vpon his horse, the Greyhounde would take the Horse taylor in his mouth, and drawe backward, and would also crie and howle maruailously loud. By these signes þ knight vnderstood whether he should speede in his Journey, or not. The Faulcon was so Gentle and so hardy that he was neuer cast off his prey, but he tooke it.

The same Knight had great pleasure in Iusting and Tourney, so that vpon a time vnder his Castle hee proclaimed a Turnament, to the which came many good Lords & Knightes. The Knight entred into the Tourney and his Ladye went with her maydens

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maydens to see it, and as they went out, after went the Pourisbers, and left the Child lying there alone in the Cradle in the Hall, where the Greyhounde laye nigh the wall, and the Hauke oz fawolcon standing vpon a Perch. In this Hall there was a serpent lurking oz hidde in a hole to al them of the Castle vnkowne, the which when he perceiued that they were all absent, hee put his head out of his hole, and when he sawe none but the Childe lying in the Cradle, he went out of his hole towarde the Cradle for to haue slayne the Child. The noble fawolcon perceiuing that and beholding the Greyhound that was sleeping, made such a noyse and rustling with her winges presently, that the Greyhounde awooke and arose vp, and when hee sawe the Serpent nigh the Childe, anon against him he leapt, and they both fought so long together, vntill that

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the Serpēt had greuously hurt and wounded the Greyhound, that hee bled so soze, that the earth about the Cradle was all bloudie. The Greyhound when that he felt himselfe so greuously wounded and hurt, start fiercely vppon the Serpent & fought so soze together and so eagerly, that between them the Cradle was ouertost with the Child, the bottome vppward. And because that the Cradle had foure Pomes like feete, falling towarde the earth, they saued the Childs life, and his visage from any hurting, what shall I saue more? Incontinent thereafter, with great paine the Greyhound overcame and slue the Serpent, & went & layd him downe againe in his place, and licked his wounds.

And anone after as the Iusts and Tourney was done, the Flourishers were the first that came into the Castle, and as they saw the Cradle turned

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ned vpside doونه on the earth co-  
passed round about with bloud, and  
that the Greyhound was also bloo-  
die, they thought and sayd amongst  
themselues that the Greyhounde  
had slayne the Childe, and were not  
so wise as to turne vp the Tra-  
dle againe with the Childe, for to  
haue seene what was thereof befall-  
len. But they sayd, let vs flye or run  
away, least that our Maister put or  
lay the blame vpon vs, and slay vs.  
As they were thus running away,  
they met with the Knights wife, and  
she sayd to them, wherefore make ye  
this sorow, and whither will ye run?  
then sayd they, O Lady, woe and sor-  
rowe be to vs and to you, why sayd  
shee, what is there happened, she we  
me: the Greyhound, they sayd, that  
our Lord & Maister loueth so much,  
hath deuoured and slayne your Son,  
and lieth by the wall all full of the  
bloud. As the Ladie heard this, she  
fell

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for to the earth and beganne to weep  
and crye pitiously, and sayd. alas  
O my deere Sonne beye thus slaine  
and dead, what shall I nowe doe  
that I haue mine onely Sonne thus  
lost? herewithall came in the knight  
from y<sup>e</sup> Tourney, and beholding his  
Ladie thus crying and making sor=  
rowe, hee demaunded of her where=  
fore shee made so great sorrowe and  
lamentation? She answered him,  
O my Lorde, your Greyhounde  
that ye loue so much, hath slaine your  
onely Sonne, and lyeth by the wall  
saciate with the bloud of the Childe.  
The knight vehemently angred,  
went into the Hall, and the Grey=  
hound went to meete him, and did  
fawne as hee was woont to doe, and  
the knight drew out his Sword  
and with one stroake smote off the  
Greyhounds head, and then went to  
the Cradle & found his son all whole,  
and by the Cradle the Serpent slain,  
and

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and then by diuers signes hee percei-  
ued that the Greyhound had fought  
against the Serpent for the defence of  
the Child. Then with great sorrow  
and weeping hee tare his haire, and  
said, woe be to me, that for the words  
of my wife, I haue slayne my good  
Greyhound, the which hath saued  
my Childes life, and hath slaine the  
Serpent: therefore I will put my  
selfe to pennance, and so hee brake  
his Sword in thre peeces, and wēt  
towards the holy Land, and abode  
there all the dayes of his life. Then  
sayd the Maister to the Emperour,  
Lorde vnderstand yee what I haue  
said, and he answered and sayd, right  
well. The Maister sayd, if that ye do  
put your Son to death for the words  
of your wife, it shall happen to you,  
worle than it did to the knight for his  
Greyhound. The Emperour sayd, ye  
haue shewed me a faire example, and  
without doubt this day my Sonne  
shall

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shall not die : then said the Maister,  
if ye do so, ye do wisely, and I thanke  
you that ye haue spared him this day  
for my sake.

The Second Complaint  
of the Emperesse.

**W**hen that the Emperesse heard  
that the child was not yet dead,  
shee began to weepe bitterly, and sate  
her downe on the earth in ashes, and  
would not lift vp her head : as the  
Emperour heard that, he entred into  
the Chamber and said to her, O good  
wife, wherefore make ye all this sor-  
row, & trouble your selfe so much : she  
sayd, aske you that of me : know you  
not well what great Despight & shame  
I haue suffered of your unhappy son :  
and how ye haue promised mee that  
you would see Justice to be therefore  
executed on him, & yet he liueth : Of  
troth it shall happen to you as it hap-  
pened to a shepheard & a Boie. The  
Emperour sayd, I pray you shew me  
that

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that example for my learning : Hee  
sayd, as yesterday I shewed one and  
saw no good effect that came thereof,  
to what intent should I now doe the  
like ? Nevertheless, I shall declare  
this notable example vnto you, as  
hereafter you shall heare.

The Second Example of the  
Empresse.

There was sometime an Emperour  
the which hadde a great Forrest,  
wherein was a Boze which was so  
cruell and so fell, that men going  
through the Forrest, he killed and de-  
uoured. The Emperour being there-  
fore right heauie, proclaimed thro-  
ughout all his Dominions, that  
whatsoeuer hee was that could slay  
the Boze, shoulde haue his onely  
Daughter to wife, and thereto his  
Empire after his death : and as this  
was in all places proclaymed, there  
was not one man found that durste  
giue the aduenture : but there was  
a Shep-

### The seven wise

a Shepheard, who thought in himselfe, might I this Boze overcome and slay, I should not onely aduance my selfe, but also all my generation and kindred. So he tooke his shepherdes staffe in his hand and went to the Forrest. And as the Boze had of him a sight, hee drew towards the heardeſman, and he for feare clymed vpon a Tree, then the Boze beganne to bite and gnawe the tree, so that the heard thought shortly that hee should haue ouerthrowne it. This Tree was laden with great plentie of fruite, the Heard gathered and plucked thereof, and cast them to the Boze, insomuch that when hee was filled therewith, he layd him downe to sleepe, the which the heard perceiuing, by little and little descended the Tree, and with the one hand he clawed the Boze, and with the other held himselfe vpon the Tree, & seeing that the Boze slept very sound-



# Maiſters.

ly, hee drew out his knife and ſhote  
the Boze to the heart and killed him,  
and ſo conſequently wedded the Em-  
perours Daughter to his Wiſe, and  
after the death of her father, he was  
made Emperoz: then ſaid ſhe my lord  
wot ye not what I haue ſayd, he ſaid,  
right well. Then ſaid ſhe, this migh-  
tie Boze betokeneth your moſt Noble  
Perſon, againſt whome may no man  
withſtand, neyther by wiſedome, nor  
with ſtrength. This ſhepherd with  
his ſtaffe, is the Perſon of your vn-  
gracious Sonne who with his  
ſtaffe of cunning beginneth to play  
with you as the Heardſman clawed  
the Boze, and made him to ſleepe,  
and after killed him: in the ſame ma-  
ner the Maiſters of your Sonne by  
their falſe fables & narrations clawe  
you & gloſe with you, vntill the time  
that your Sonne ſlay you, that hee  
may raigne. Then ſaid the Emperoz,  
God forbid that they ſhould do to me  
as

The seven wise

as hee did to the Woze, and sayd vn-  
to her, this day my Sonne shall die,  
and shee answered, if ye doe so, then  
you doe wisely. Then the Emperour  
the second time sitting in iudgement,  
commaunded to lead him to the Gal-  
lowes and hange him, and whilst he  
was going, the second Maister came  
before y<sup>e</sup> Emperour doing him reue-  
rence, as before is shewed in the com-  
ming of the first Maister, to whome  
the second Maister sayd, O my Lord  
Emperour, if you should so slay your  
Sonne for the words of your wife, it  
might worse come to you, than it did  
to a knight which for the words of  
his wife, was vniustly put vppon y<sup>e</sup>  
Hillopie: the Emperour said, O good  
Maister tell me how that happened, &  
he said, My Lord I shall not say it, y<sup>e</sup>  
vnlesse you will call your Sonne  
from the death vntill the time that he  
example bee tould, the which if it  
turne you not from your purpose  
then

Maisters,

the let your wil be fulfilled. Then the  
Emperoz Comanded that the Chil  
should be called backe once again.  
And vnder this manner that follow  
eth, the second Maister began to tell  
The Example of the second Maister.

**I**n a Little was as ancient Knight  
which wedded a young wife and  
a faire as yee haue done, whome  
he loued aboue all earthly things.  
This Knight was a very circumspect  
and carefull Husband, insomuch that  
euery night he locked in the doore with  
his owne handes, and layd the keyes  
vnder his bedd hed. And in this Citie  
there was a law or custome, that at a  
certain houre in the night a Bell was  
sounded to be rung, & after the ringing of  
that Bell, if any men or women were  
by the Watchmen founde in the  
Streets, all that night they should be  
kept fast in Prison, & on the morrow  
if it vpon a Pillory, that all the people  
might behold and woonder at them.

then

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This

## The seven wise

This foresaid knight had little mind  
nor lust to fleshy deeds, for he was old  
and might not satisfy and performe  
the desires and appetites of his plea-  
sant young wife: wherefore euerie  
night she (hauing a Paramour, her  
husband sleeping) tooke the keyes  
and went to her Loue, and when she  
came home againe, all priuily she laid  
the keyes vnder her husbands head,  
and thus played she many times. So  
it happened vppon a night, that the  
knight awaked out from his sleepe,  
and missed his wife, and also the keyes  
vnder his beds head: wherevpon he  
arose vp and went vnto the doores  
and found them open, the which he  
closed and bolted fast within, & then  
went vp againe into his chamber, &  
looked out at the window towards  
the street: and when it was neere  
day, about the third cocks crow, his  
wife came home from her best beloued  
and found the dooze shut and bolted  
within

Maisters,

within, whereat she was sorrowfull;  
 neuertheles she knocked to haue come  
 in. Then spake the Knight out of the  
 window, O thou most euill and vn-  
 cleane wife, now I know and am full  
 assured, that many a time thou hast  
 forsaken my bed and gone and done  
 adulterie, now thou shalt stand vntill  
 the bell be rung, and that the watch-  
 men may take thee, and do with thee  
 according to the law. The wife an-  
 swered, my Lord, wherefore lay yee  
 that to me, for in very troth the cause  
 of my being abroad was for no euill,  
 but I was called for by my Mothers  
 maide, & fetched in the night by her,  
 and when I saw you sleepe so sweet-  
 ly, I durst not awake you because  
 yee are old, and therefore I tooke the  
 keyes and went to my mother who is  
 so sore sicke, that I feare to morrow  
 shee must be annointed or annepled:  
 notwithstanding, for that I would  
 not offend you, I haue hasted againe  
 to

## The seven wise

to you, and haue left her lying in  
great paine and infirmitie, therefore  
I pray you for the loue of GOD let  
mee in befoze the Bell ringeth. The  
Knight answered, ye shall not so come  
in, yee must there abide vnto the time  
that the Bell ringeth, and vntill that  
the Watchmen come and take you:  
then sayd she, that shold be to you & to  
me and to all our friends & kindred a  
great shame and reproch, therfore for  
the reuerence of almighty God let me  
come in : then sayd he, haue in thy  
mine (cuill and false wife) how often  
times thou hast forsaken my bed and  
done adulterie, it is much better that  
thou suffer shame, and bewaile thy  
sinnes here in this world, than for to  
suffer paine in Hell: shee sayd agayne  
to him, I pray you for the loue of him  
that was crucified, and died on the  
crosse, haue pittie on me: the Knight  
answered, thou labourest in vaine, for  
thou shalt not come in, but shalt tarry  
the

Maisters.

the coming of the watchmen. She  
hearing that, sayd : My Lord, you  
knowe well that by this doore stan-  
deth a well, if ye let me not come in,  
I shall therein drowne my selfe, ra-  
ther than all my frends should be sha-  
med for me : then said he, would God  
that thou haddest bene drowned  
long before euer thou camest in my  
bed. As they thus spake together, the  
Moone went down, & all was dark:  
then sayd she, if it will none otherwise  
be, I shall drowne my selfe, but yet a-  
foze, like a true Christian woman, I  
will make my Testament. First  
I bequeath to GOD my soule, and  
my bodie to be buried in the Church  
of Saint Peter : and of all other  
things and goodes that GOD hath  
sent mee, I giue vnto you to dispose  
for my Soule, after your wisdom  
and discretion. And when shee had  
thus sayd, she went to the well and  
there lying a great stone, with both

D ;

her



The seven wise

her armes, she lift it vp and said, now  
I drowne my selfe, and cast the stone  
downe into the well, and went again  
priuily and stood by the doore: the  
knight hearing the noyse, cryed with  
a loud voice, saying: Alas, alas, my  
wife is drowned, and hastily came  
downe & ran to the well, and when  
she saw that the doore was open, anon  
she entred in and locked the gate, and  
went vp to the chamber, and lay and  
looked out of the window: the knight  
stood by the well and cried and wept  
bitterly, and said, woe be to mee, I  
haue nowe lost my most best beloued  
wife, cursed be the time that I made  
fast the doore against her. The Lady  
heard that and said, O thou cursed  
ould Greyfard, why standest thou  
there this time of the night, was not  
my bodie to thee sufficient? where-  
fore goe yee thus euery night out to  
your Harlots and your whoozes, and  
leauie my bed: As he heard the voice

Maisters.

of his wife, hee was right glad, and  
sayd, blessed be God that yet shee is  
not drowned : but my good Ladye,  
wherfore lay you such things against  
me : I thought to haue chastised you,  
and therefore I locked the doze, but  
in no wise I intended your perill : yee  
know well wat sorrow I made for  
you when I heard you to haue fallen  
into the net, & therfore I came light-  
ly to haue holpen you. wherupon  
she said, thou lvest falsly, I neuer com-  
mitted such default as thou layest to  
mee, but it appeareth by a common  
Proverbe, he that is guilty or culpa-  
ble himselte in a sin, hee iudgeth every  
man to be in the same, or else, the fa-  
ther neuer sought his sonne in the D-  
en, except hee had been therein him-  
selte : so in like case conceivest thou  
a false surmise of me, but one thing I  
promise thee, thou shalt abide there  
untill the watchmen come, and the  
Bell hee runge, that they may lead

### The seven wise

thee before the Judges to abide and suffer the law. Then said þ Knight, wherefore lay you such things to mee that am old, impotent, and most vnmeet to delight in such game? I haue been conuersant in this Citie and neuer was defamed, and therefore let me in, that to me & to your selfe ye doe no shame. She said, ye speak in vaine, it is better that ye foze thinke your sinnes rather in this world, than in Hell, haue in mind what þ wise man sayth, a poore man proud, a rich man a liar, an old man a foole, God hateth: so be yee a foole and rich, what neede was it to you for to flaunder me, and cannot be content when as yee haue the flower of my youth at your pleasure, but ye turnest to Harlots: it is the great grace of God, that you, haue time & space to foze thinke you, least ye should perish and be damned for manye sins, & therefore suffer your pennaunce now patiently. The knight  
sayd

sayd, I  
though  
and he  
that he  
himself  
Now  
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Maisters.

sayd, O my best beloued Ladie, although it be so, yet is God mercifull, and he asketh nothing of a sinner, but that he amend his life, and forgerhinke himselfe, and do penance for his sins. Now let me come in & I will make amends: she sayd, what Deuill hath made you so good a Preacher, but so come you not in: and as they thus spake the bell rang, then he intreated feruently, saying, now suffer me to come in that I be not asbamed for euer: she answered, the ringing of the Bell pretendeth the health of your soule, And as this was said, came the Watchmen about y<sup>e</sup> City, and found the Knight standing in the street, and sayd vnto him, O good man it is not good that ye stand here in this houre of the night, As she heard the voice of the Watchmen, shee sayd: good fellowes venge me on that old accursed whozemonger, for ye knowe whose Daughter I am: this cursed old man  
is

### The seuen wife

is wont every night to leaue my bed, and go to his whores and harlots, I haue long forborne him, and would not shew it, ne complaine vppon him to my friends, for I trusted that hee would haue amended his misrule, & it helpeth not, and therefore take him and punish him according to the law, that all such old Dotards may take example by him. Then the watchmē tooke him, and all night chasticed him in prison, and on y<sup>e</sup> morrow they set him on the Pillorie. Now said the Maister to the Emperoz, Lord, haue ye vnderstood what I haue said? and he said, right well. Thē said the maister, if you put your son to death by the instigatiō of your wife, it shall chance to you worse than to the knight.

The Emperour said, she was the worst woman that euer I heard off, that so falsely brought her husband to shame and rebuke: I say vnto you Maister, that for the reason of this  
exam=

Maisters.

example my sonne shall not die this day. The master said vnto him, if you doe so, then doe you wisely, and that hereafter you shall ioy: and so I commit you to God, & thanke you of your patient hearing, and for the sparing of your Sonne, and so departed.

The third Complaint of the

Empresse.

**W**hen the Empresse heard that the Child was not yet dead, she wept bitterly, and entred into her priuie Chamber, and tare her skinne with her nayles, & with a loud voide cryed, alas that ever I was bozne, that I so great a Kinges daughter should thus be reproched & shamed, and thereof can haue no remedie: her Gentlewomen hearing this, went & shewed it to the Emperoz, & he went vnto her and comforted her, saying, O Lady, weepe not so, for it becometh you not. And she answered, the loue that I haue and owe vnto you, maketh

### The seven wise

maketh me moze to sorow, than the contempt of the death, for why the inward loue of your hart hath hitherto prohibited and lettred me that I haue not retourned againe into my Countrey to my Father, but I feare if I should so doe, it might turne you to harme, for hee is mightie to honour mee with riches, and to reuenge my quarrell & despight in such wise that you might repent it. Whereto said the Emperour, let that passe out of your minde, neither repeat it any moze, for as long as I liue, I shall neuer sayle you. And she sayd, Lord I pray God that ye may long liue, but I feare me that it shall happen to you as it fell to a knight & his Sonne that would not burie his Fathers head in the Churchyard, and yet his Father was for him slaine: then said the Emperoz shew me y<sup>e</sup> example how it was that he would not bury his Fathers head: she sayd, I shall doe it to your profit.

The



Maisters.

The third Example of  
the Empreſſe.

**I**n the Littie of Roome there was a  
Knight which had two Daughters  
and one Son. This Knight had so  
great delight in hunting, Iusting &  
tourney, and all thing that he might  
win & get, he laid it and spent it ther=  
vpon. In that time lued the Empe=  
rour named Octavian, which in ri=  
ches of gold and siluer exceeded al o=  
ther Kinges and Princes, insomuch  
that he had a Tower full of Gold, &  
ordained a Knight to haue y keeping  
& charge therof. This knight that so  
haunted Iusting & other idle games,  
came to so great pouerty, that he was  
disposed to sell his heritage, and cal=  
led to him his son, and said, my Son  
it behooueth me of your counsell, for  
necessitie and pouertie compelleth me  
to sell mine heritage, or else to finde  
another way by which I may liue,  
for if I should sell mine heritage, ye &  
your

The seven wise

your Sisters should perishe. The son  
said, father if we can find any maner  
of meane without selling of our heri-  
tage, I should be readie to helpe you.  
The father said, I haue bethought  
me of good counsell: The Emperour  
hath a Tower full of gould, let vs  
go by night time thither with instru-  
ments, and digge and hew through  
the tower, and let vs take of the gold  
as much as shall suffice vs. whereto  
answered the son and said, that coun-  
saile cannot be amended, for it is bet-  
ter to take of the Emperours gold to  
helpe vs, than to sell our inheritance.  
So they arose vp both on a night, &  
went to the tower, and with instru-  
ments they made a hole through the  
wall, and tooke as much gould as  
they both could carrie away at that  
time, and the knight paid his debts  
and haunted againe Iusts as he did  
before, vntill that all was spent and  
consumed. In the meane while, the  
keeper

Maisters.

keeper of the Treasure went into the Tower, and when he saw the Treasure stolen, and a great hole made through the wall, he began to waxe sore afraid, & went to the Emperour and shewed him what was befallen: to whome the Emperour said all angrily, what needest thou to tell me that: haue I not deliuered to thee my Treasure, and therefore of thee will I aske it againe: As y<sup>e</sup> keeper heard that, he went to the Tower againe, and set afoze the hole a great vessell full of pitch mingled with other gins so subtilly, that no man might come in at that hole, but that he must needs fall into that vessell, and then falling thereinto, he could no moze get out of it. Not long after, the knight had consumed and spent all the gold, and went againe with his son to the tower to steale moze. And as the father went in first, anon he was fallen into the vessell with pitch by to the necke

### The seven wife

necke, and when he saw that he was taken and could not get out, hee sayd to his Son, follow me not, for if thou doest, thou canst not escape by any meanes: then said the son, God forbid that I should not help you, for if you are found, we are all but dead, & if that ye may not be holpen by me, I shall seeke counsaile how that you may bee deliuered & holpen. The father said, there is none other counsaile but with thy sword smite off my head, and as my bodie is found without an head, no man shall knowe me, and so thou and my Daughters may scape and auoide this worldly shame and death. The sonne said, father ye haue giuen the best counsell, for if it were so, that any man might perceiue any knowledge of you, none of vs should escape that death: and therefore it is expedient that your head bee smitten off: anon he drew out his Sword and smote off his fathers head and cast it

it into a pit, and then went and shew-  
ed unto his Sisters all the matter,  
who many dayes after pynfully be-  
wailed the death of their father. Af-  
ter this, the keeper of the Treasure  
came into the Tower, & found there  
a bodie without any head, whereat  
he wondred sore, and shewed it to the  
Emperour, to whome he sayd, binde  
that body to the taile of an horse, and  
so draw it through all the streets of  
the Citie, and diligently take good  
heed if ye heare any cry or weeping:  
whereforet ye heare that, he is Lord  
of the house, take all them, and with  
the body draw them to the gallows  
and hang them. The which the Em-  
perours servants fulfilled according  
to his commandement, and as they  
came right against the house of the  
dead knight, the daughters seeing  
the bodie of their dead father, pre-  
sently made a marvellous great  
sike & weeping, and as their

### The foolish wife

brother heard that anon he wounded  
himselfe in the mouth with a knife, so  
that great plenty of blood came out  
of the wound; the officers when they  
heard the cry, entered into the house,  
demandaunting the cause of their cla-  
mour; then answered the son, they  
lament because I am thus wounded,  
for when my sisters saw my blood so  
abundantly go out, as you see, they  
began to weep & cry; and when the  
officers saw the wound, they believed  
his words, & so deferred to vent their  
waies, and hung the knights bodie  
upon the gallows, where he hung a  
long tyme, and his son would neither  
take his bodie downe from the Gal-  
lowes, nor yet hurie his head. The  
Emperesse said, understand ye what I  
haue said; the emperor said, very wel.

The Declaration of chiefe and  
Examples to succeed  
Then spake the Emperesse thus; my  
Lord, I leave it with so chance to  
you

Masters.

you and to your son. This Knight for  
the love of his son was made poore,  
and first he committed theft, & brake  
the Tower, secondarily caused him-  
selfe to be beheaded, that his Children  
should have no shame, after that his  
son cast his head into a dike, and bu-  
ried it neither in church nor in church-  
yard, but suffered his bodie to hange  
still vpon the gallows: if that hee  
could not haue taken it downe in the  
day, he might well haue done it in the  
night. In the same manner ye labour  
night and day, that ye may promote  
your son to honor & riches, but with-  
out doubt he daily labourerh for your  
confusion and destruction, that hee  
may reign after you in your Empire.  
Therefore I advise you that you cause  
him to be hanged before hee destroye  
you: the Emperour sayde, you haue  
shewed mee a good example. The  
Knights Some when he had smit-  
ten off his fathers head, would not



## The seven wise

burie it : without doubt my Sonne  
shall not doe so by me : but he soon  
commaunded his Officers that they  
should lead him to the Gallies, and  
they all obeyed his commaundement  
happily, and as they led him through  
the Streets, the people made great  
noise and lamentations, crying alas,  
alas, the only Son of the Emperour  
is led againe toward the Gallies :  
and as they led him, the third Ma-  
ster named Erason, came crying by,  
and as the Child saw him he bowed  
his head to him, as though he  
had said, haue minde upon me, and  
the people cried, O good Master,  
hast thou, and take your Disciple, and  
so hee rode with great speed to the  
Emperour. And when he came be-  
fore him, he most humbly saluted him,  
and said, thy coming hither shall be-  
lieve auance thee, for I thinke it long  
to be reuenged of thee. The Master  
said, I hoped at my coming to haue  
been

been welcomer, and haue had a better  
reward, and not to bee so rebuked.  
The Emperour said, as yee haue de-  
serued to shall it be to you. To whom  
he said, My Lord, what haue I de-  
serued: the Emperour sayd, ye right  
well deserue death, for I deliuered to  
you my son with speaking, and w<sup>th</sup> a  
mannered, for to be enfourmed and  
taught, and ye haue deliuered him a-  
gain to me dumbe & a Ribaud. To  
whom y<sup>e</sup> Father said, in that you say  
he is dum, that I commit to god, for  
he maketh the dumme to speake, and  
the deaf to heare: but in that you say  
hee would haue enforced your wife,  
that would I gladly knowe, if any  
creature haue seene that, for there is  
no malice aboue the malice of a wo-  
man, & that shall I proue by a good  
example, that a woman is full of lea-  
sings and deceptions, and if you put  
to death your Sonne for the wordes  
of your wife, it shall happen to you

### The seuen wife

As it did to a rich Burgesse of his wife and his Pie, the which he loued maruailously. To whom the Emperour said, I pray you tell mee how that women are full of malice and leasings: who said, I will not shew it, but if you will first call againe your son from the death, then at your pleasure I shall shew the example. Then the Emperour anon made his sonne to be called againe, and to be put in pryson. And the Maister beganne to tell the Example in this fourme following.

#### The Example of the third Maister.

**T**here was in a Citie a rich Burgesse that had a Pie, the which hee loued so much, that every day hee taught her to speake Latine and Hebrue: and when she had learned very perfectly to speake these two Languages, all that she saw & heard shee shewed and told to her Maister, This

This young man had a faire young  
 wiffe as yet haue, the which he loued  
 much, but shee on the contrarye loued  
 not him, because he might not furnish  
 her of such pleasures and iusts as  
 she desired to haue, and therefore had  
 shee another faire young man that  
 shee loued aboue her Husband, and  
 alwayes as her Husband was out of  
 the towne about his Marchan-  
 dise and other businesse, shee sent for  
 her best beloued, that they might  
 make good chere together. The Wiffe  
 as shee espied that, told it vnto her  
 Maister at his comming home, in  
 such wise, that the noyse ranne all o-  
 uer the Citie of her adulterie, where-  
 fore her Husband many times vbra-  
 led and chidde with her: she answered  
 him, ye beleue your cursed Wiffe which  
 as long as shee liueth, shall alwayes  
 make betwixt vs variance and dis-  
 cord: and hee sayde, the Wiffe cannot  
 lye, for what shee seeth and heareth,

The felicit wife

that she telleth me, and therefore I  
believe her moze than you. It fortu-  
ned that this man went into farre  
Countries about his Marchandise,  
and as soone as he was gone, his wife  
sent for her friend and Loe to solace  
and make good cheere with him. But  
he durst not come by day light, lest he  
should be seen and marked of the people: and  
when night was come, he knocked at  
his gate, and there was ready to open  
it, and said, goe in freely, for so much  
shall I see you. She said, I feare me that  
the cursed Witch hath aduised vs, for by  
her is come great slander vpon vs  
througheout all the Citie. But in the  
said boldy and feare not, and as they  
should passe through the Hall where  
the Witch was in her Cage, she heard  
say these words, O my best beloued,  
I feare me greatly, lest that the Witch  
shall bewray vs. And as the wife  
heard that, she said, be still stille, it is

darke

darke she may not see you. Then the  
 Pie hearing that sayd, if I see thee  
 not, yet I heare thy voice, and thou  
 doest wrong to my Maister, for thou  
 sleepest with my Maister, and when  
 my Maister cometh I shal tell him.  
 The young man hearing that, sayd,  
 told I not you that the Pie shoulde  
 discover vs. And the wife sayd, feare  
 not, for this night wee shall be avenge-  
 ged on the Pie, and so they entred in-  
 to the chamber, & slept together that  
 night. About midnight the wife arose  
 and called her Husbond and said, fetch  
 me a Ladder and let it up to the rooie  
 of the house, that I may wreake mee  
 vppon the Pie: the Husbond did such  
 so, and they both went up and made  
 an hole through the couering of the  
 house, right ouer against the Pie, and  
 there-through cast sand, clay, stones,  
 and water vppon the Pie, in so much  
 that the poore Pie was nere dead.  
 And on the morrow the young man  
 went

The seven wise

went early out at the backe Dore: and  
when the good man was comming  
home, as his custome was, hee went  
and visited his Pie, and sayd to her,  
O Pie my beloued Bird, tell me how  
thou hast fared all the whiles that I  
haue been out: She said, Maister  
I shall tell you tydings that I haue  
heard: your wife asloone as you  
were gone, by the night time shee let  
a man come in, and asloone as I  
heard that, I told him that I would  
shew it you at your comming home,  
yet notwithstanding she led him into  
your Chamber, and slept with him all  
night: you asked mee also how that  
I haue done in your absence, and I  
say to you of a troth, that I was ne-  
uer so neere my deach as I was that  
same night with snow, haile, & raine,  
that fell vpon me, so long together,  
that I was almost left for dead. The  
wife when shee heard that, said to  
her husband, Sir you beleue your  
Pie



Maiſters.

Die, now may ye heare what ſhe ſaith  
ſhee complaineth that in the ſame  
night, there fell ſo much ſnowe, haile,  
and raine vpon her, that ſhee was al-  
moſt dead, and yet there was none of  
them all that ſame night, for there  
was not in a yere a fairer, nor a clea-  
rer night that it was, & therefore from  
henceforth belieue her not: then went  
the good man to his neighbours, and  
aſked of them, if in that night there  
were any haile or raine, they anſwe-  
red, that ſome of them had waked all  
that night, and in all that yere they  
had not ſeen a fairer night: then went  
he to his houſe and ſaid to his wife, I  
haue found you in the troth, for the  
night was faire and cleare, as I vn-  
derſtand of your neighbors. You may  
now know of a troth, ſaid ſhee, that  
the Die is a Lyar, and with her lea-  
ſings ſhe hath ſowne & made diſcord  
betwixt vs, and moreouer I am de-  
famed through the LITTLE by her falſe  
lea-

The seven wise

dealings. Then the Burgesse went to the Die, and said, wherefore hast thou made lyes and false tales betwixt mee and my wife, is tis the thanke that I haue for the meat that I was wont to giue thee with mine owne hands every day, and thou hast also thereby brought my wife into great Defamation through all the Citie. The Die answered, God knoweth I cannot lye, for that I saw and heard, haue I shewed you, then said he, thou lyes, hast thou not said that in that same night was Hail and Snowe, and rayne, that thou hadst neere hand lost thy life, which is false, and therefore from hencefoorth thou shalt make no more dealings nor discord betwixt me and my wife, and so tooke the Die and brake her necke. As the wife sawe that, she was glad, and said, now haue ye done well, now may we all our life dayes liue in rest and peace. And when he had killed the  
the

### Masters.

the Die, he looked vp and saw in the  
top of the house a Ladder, and a ves-  
sell with water, sand, and stones, and  
as he beheld that, he perceiued the  
fallhood of his wife, and cried with a  
loude voice, woe be vnto me, that for  
my willes wordes I haue killed my  
Die, and also my solace & ioy lost, the  
which in all things said to me troth.  
And as he had thus done, anon for  
warre he left his Marchandise, and  
all his house, and went towards the  
Wolfe land, and neuer turned agayne  
towards his wife. Then the Master  
said to the Emperour, Sir, haue you  
vnderstood what I haue said: hee  
answered right well, & Master said,  
was not that a false and curled wile,  
that so by her lealings caused the Die  
to be killed: The Emperour said, in  
troth she was full of fallnesse, it piti-  
eth me greatly to thinke vpon the  
Die, the which for her true saying,  
lost her life, Verily I must say vnto  
you,

### The seuen wise

you, that you haue told me a faire example, theretore this day my Son shall not die. Then said the Maister, Sir you doe wisely, and I thanke you that you haue spared your sonne this day for my sake, and so to god I commend you.

### The Fourth Complaint of the Empresse.

**W**hen the Empresse heard that the child was not yet dead, she made great noyse and crying, so much wise that shee was heard through the Palace, and said, woe be vnto me that euer I was made Empresse, would to God I had dyed when I was first brought into these parts: when the Emperour heard the noyse and crye that she made, he presently entered into her Chamber and comforted her as much as he might, and demanded the cause of her lamentation, who said: O my most louing Lord, haue you no wonder, though that

Maisters.

that I be in this sorow and agone,  
for I am your wife, and in your com-  
panie by your Sonne I am shamed,  
and yee say to me lately all be bled and  
scratched, and you haue promised mee  
that he therfore should be hanged;  
and yet he liueth, wherfore should  
I not be sorrie? the Emperour answer-  
ed, be content & pleased, and I shall  
do Justice vpon my Son to his colow  
but in that I forbare him yester day,  
was at the motion of one of the Ma-  
sters, by an example: then said hee,  
haue yee forbid to doe Justice for one  
worde were it so for all the world, ye  
should not let to doe Justice; and yee  
say for the example of one Maister  
you haue stayed it. I feare mee it shall  
happen to you & with your Masters,  
as vpon a time it fortuned to an Em-  
perour with his senea to the Masters.  
The Emperour said, I pray you tell  
me that same example. Shyrt said, to  
what intent should I so labour all in  
vaine

# Thesewenwife

hadde: for yester day I shewed you a  
 good example, and it answered not,  
 and whatsoener I shew you for your  
 honour and profit, that the Maisters  
 of your Sonne turne vp and done  
 to your destruction, as in this present  
 example I shall clerely shew you: to  
 whome the Emperour said, O my  
 best beloved Lady, tell me that exam-  
 ple that therby I may the better be-  
 ware hereafter, for though that I  
 respite my sonnes life for one day, I  
 shall not therfore give him his life,  
 for that which is deferred is not ther-  
 fore forgiven: and she said, gladly I  
 shall shew it you for your profit, and  
 beganne to tell it, as hereafter fol-  
 loweth.

The Fourth Example of the good  
 Emperesse  
 Sometime there was in the Citie  
 of Rome a Crien wife Maister, by  
 whome all the Empire was go-  
 verned and ruled, and the Emperour  
 that

## Maisters,

that then was, did neuer attempt any thing without the counsell of the maisters : wherebpon, they perceiuing that the Emperour was so affected and enclyned to them, that without them he would not ordaine or doe any thing, diuised by their Arte and cunning, that the Emperour should cleerely see as long as hee was in the Pallace, but as soone as hee was out of y<sup>e</sup> Pallace, he should become blind: and that did they, to the intent that they might the more freely haue the Dealing themselves of all things that appertained to the Emperour, by the which they gotte and wanne to their great profit and lucre of goods : and after they had made and wrought the experiment, they could neuer change it, ne vndo it afterward, but the Emperour abode still blind many yeares. And the seauen Maisters made and proclaymed throughout the Empire, that if any mā had dreamed a dream

f

he



### The seven wise

hee should come vnto them with a  
flozen of gold or Siluer, & they would  
expound and declare vnto him the in-  
terpretation of his Dreame : where-  
by, and by other vniust meanes, they  
obtained much moze substance and  
Money of the people, than the Em-  
perour did. So vpon a time when he  
sat at the table with the Emperesse, he  
began to sigh and sorrow in himselfe,  
and when she perceiued that, she en-  
quired diligently of him the cause of  
his heauinesse & dolour: the Emperour  
said, should it not be heauie and sor-  
rowfull to mee, y I so long haue been  
blind, & cannot see out of my Wallace,  
and yet can haue or find no remedy ?  
To whom spake the Emperesse & said  
Lord heare my counsaile, and it shall  
neuer repent you if you do thereafter.  
In your Court you haue seauen wise  
Maisters, by whome yee and all the  
Empire is gouerned, if you now be-  
hold and marke this in your minde,  
yee

## Maisters,

pee shall finde, that they are the cause  
 of your blindnesse and disease, and if  
 it be so, they are worthy to dye a most  
 shamefull death, therefore take heede  
 to my counsell and aduise : first send  
 for them, & shew to them your disease  
 and infirmitie, and threaten them on  
 paine of their liues, that they should  
 find some speedy remedy to helpe you  
 of your sicknes and blindnesse. This  
 counsell pleased the Emperour well,  
 and anon hee sent for the Maisters, &  
 when they were come, the Emperour  
 anon shewed to them his infirmitie,  
 and blindnesse, and charged them on  
 paine of death, that they should pre-  
 sently seeke some remedy to ease him  
 thereof. Then answered they, ye de-  
 sire of vs a thing that is difficult and  
 hard to be done thus shortly, but giue  
 vs respite for ten dayes, and then we  
 shall giue you our full answer. The  
 Emperour was therewith well con-  
 tent and pleased: then the seuen wise

### The seuen wise

Maisters went to counsell how they might restore vnto him his sight againe, and in no manner of wise could they finde the meane how to put away the blindnes from the Emperoz, wherfore they were all right sorrowfull, and sayde among themselues, without wee finde a remedye, wee are all but dead men. So they went from thence throughout all the Empire, and sought if they could finde any remedye or coucell therfore. It happened them vppon a time, going through a Littie, and in the midst thereof, they found Children playing and after them came a man with a talent or flozen of Gould, and sayd to them, good Maisters, this night I haue Dreamed a dreame, the interpretation thereof I would faine knowe, wherfore I pray you shew me what it signifieth, & take this gold to you. That heard one of the Children that played among the other, and sayd to him

Maisters.

him: giue mee the Gould and then I  
 shalle expound thy dreame. The man  
 sayd, I dreamed this night that in  
 the middest of my Orchard, was a  
 great spring of water, whereof came  
 many small springs, that all mine  
 Orcharde was full and ouerflowed  
 with water: the Child sayd, take a  
 Spade and digge in the same place  
 whereas ye thought that the water  
 spronge out, and there shall yee finde  
 an Hoord of Gould so great, that yee  
 and all your Children and Lyneage  
 shall bee for euer rich: the man did  
 as the Childe had shewed him, and  
 found the Treasure according to his  
 woordes. Then went the man to  
 the Child and offered him a pounce  
 waight of the Gould that hee hadde  
 founde, for the interpretation of his  
 dreame, but hee would receiue none,  
 but committed him to the prayers of  
 the man. The seven Maisters, when  
 they heard the Childe so wisely ex=  
 pound

### The seven wise

pound the dreame, they sayd to him,  
good Child what is your name: He  
answerd and said, I am called Mar-  
line. Then said the Maisters, wee  
see surely great wisdom in you, we  
shall shew vnto you a strange matter,  
and of that wee would gladly that  
ye could finde a remedy. The Child  
said, shew vnto me your matter: and  
they sayd, the Emperour of Rome as  
long as he is in his Pallace hath his  
sight very cleere without any impe-  
diment, and as soone as hee is gone  
out of his Pallace, he is so blind that  
he cannot see. Now if yee can finde  
out the cause thereof, and giue present  
remedy whereby he may be eased and  
haue his sight againe, ye shall haue  
great reward and honour of the Em-  
perour: then answerd y child, I know  
aswell the cause of his blindness, as  
the remedy. They said all vnto him,  
come with vs to the Emperour, and  
ye shall be rewarded so largely, that  
pee

pee shall be pleased. To whome the  
 Childe sayd, I am ready to goe with  
 you. And when they came with the  
 Childe before the Emperour, they  
 said to him: Lord, lo here is the child  
 that we haue brought before you, the  
 which shall fulfill your desires tou-  
 ching the cause of your blindnes, and  
 the recouering of your sight: the Em-  
 perour sayde, Good Maisters will  
 you take vppon you, and abide there-  
 by, that the Childe shall perfourme  
 this attempt: They all sayd yea, for  
 we be expert in his wilddome. The  
 Emperour turned himselfe towards  
 the Child and said, will ye vnder-  
 take to tell me the cause of my blindnesse,  
 and the remedy: the child answered  
 and sayd, My Lord the Emperour,  
 leade mee into your bedde Chamber,  
 and there I shall shew you what is to  
 be doone, and as hee was therein  
 brought, hee said to the Seruants,  
 take of the Clothes of the bed, and all

## The seven wise

the apparell, & ye shall see wonders.  
And as that was done they sawe a  
well smoking that had seven springs  
or founts, the which when the Em-  
perour sawe, hee marvelled greatly.  
The Child sayd, ye see this well, and  
without it be quenched, ye shall ne-  
uer haue your sight, & Emperour said  
how may that bee? the Child sayd,  
but by one way: the Emperour sayd,  
shewe vs then the meane, and if it bee  
possible to mee, it shall be done, that I  
may recover againe my sight, as well  
without, as within. To whome the  
Child sayd, My Lord, the vii. springs  
of this well, are these Seauen wise  
Maisters, who hitherto haue tray-  
terously governed you and your Em-  
pire, and haue made you blind as ye  
bee without your Pallace, that they  
your subiects by extortion might pill  
and poule, ye not seeing it. But now  
they know not the remedy, therefore  
here you now my counsaile, and this  
well



Maisters.

Well shall bee quenched and extinct:  
 strike of the first Maisters head, and  
 anon hee shall the first spring quench,  
 and so by order one after another, till  
 that they are all beheaded, and anon  
 all the springs with the well shall be  
 vanished and gone away, and ye shall  
 haue againe your sight as ye had be-  
 fore: and when this was done & ful-  
 filled, the well with the seven springs  
 were vanished, And as the Emperoz  
 had his sight againe, hee made the  
 Child a great Lord, and gaue him  
 great abundance of goods: and af-  
 ter spake the Emperes, my Lord haue  
 ye well perceiued this Example that  
 I haue told you: and he sayd, yea in  
 the best wise, ye haue recited a worthy  
 and good Example. Then said shee  
 in thy same manner your Couen wise  
 Maisters intend to doe with you,  
 with their false narrations, that your  
 Sonne may raigne ouer your Em-  
 pire, which God forbid.

The

## The seven wise

The declaration of the  
Example.

**T**HIS well is your Sonne, where-  
out floweth vii. springs that sig-  
nifyeth the Seven wise Maisters,  
the which Son ye may not destroye,  
without the seven wise Maisters bee  
made feeble and brought to naught:  
that done, this well that is your son,  
with all his whiles shall not escape,  
but let him be hanged first, least hee  
haue helpe of his Maisters, and after  
consequently the seven Maisters, and  
so you shall gouerne and guide your  
Empire in rest and peace. The Em-  
perour auen commaunded his Ser-  
uants to lead his Sonne to the Gal-  
loves, which they were loath to doe.  
And there was then so great a multi-  
tude of people gathered with great  
noyse and he wayling, that the noyse  
came to the eares of the fourth Ma-  
ster named Malquidrake, the which  
leapt vppon his horse, and halsted him  
to

Maisters.

to the Pallace. Where he met with  
his Disciple and did reuerence to him  
and commended him vnto him : and  
when hee came befoze the Emperour,  
and had done his obeisance and reue=  
rence as appertained, the Emperoz  
then answered & sayd; Little thanks  
shal you haue ye ould cursed Caytiffe  
foz so ill teaching of my Sonne. I  
deliuered you my Sonne well spea=  
king, & in all things right vertuous,  
but you haue sent him home a foole,  
dumbe, and a ribaud, foz hee would  
haue laine with my wife by force, and  
therefoze all yee with him together  
shall be hanged. Then said the Mai=  
ster, my Lord, I haue not deserued so  
ill of you. God knoweth why your son  
speaketh not, in short time you shall  
perceiue other things, but the time  
is not yet come, but in that you say  
he would haue oppressed your wife,  
that is not true, noz prooued, nei=  
ther foz one single person should you  
iudge

## The seuen wise

iudge your Sonne to death. If now  
for the words of your wife, yee iudge  
your Sonne to dye, it will bee worse  
to you, than to a certaine old man and  
his wife, and that I shall well proue.  
To whome the Emperour said, think  
you to doe with mee yee old Doters,  
as sometime seuen wise mended to an  
Emperour. Whereunto sayde the  
Maisters, the offence and trespasse of  
one, or yet of Twenty, may not sound  
to the rebuke and blame of all other,  
for ouer all the world there bee both  
good and euill, but one thing of a  
troth I shall shewe to you, that euill  
shall come to you if you this day put  
your Sonne to death for the wordes  
of your wife, the which I could shew  
by a notable example. Then said the  
Emperour, will yee recite that for our  
learning: the Maister said, if ye will  
call again your Sonne, and keep him  
till I haue made declaration of the  
Example, (& afterwards as ye shall  
thinke

Maisters.

thinke good to doe with him, doe it) then will I rehearse the example, or else not. The Emperour commaunded that hee should bee called againe, and he desired the Maister to say, as here after followeth.

The Example of the Fourth  
Maister.

**T**here was an old Knight (and a right wise man) that liued long without wife or Child.

His friends came to him many times and counsailed and exhorted him, that he should take a wife.

The Knight thus counsailed, and stirred by his friends so often times, at the last hee agreed to them, and they gaue him to wife the Daughter of the Brouost of Roome, that was rich and right faire, whome when hee had scene, anon hee was made blind and taken in her loue, and began to loue her maruailously well: and whē they had been married a certaine

## The seuen wise

taime space together, & had no Child.  
Upon a time in a morning it happened that shee went to the Church,  
where shee met with her Mother,  
whome she saluted as it behoued. My  
deere Daughter sayde the Mother,  
how pleasest thou your mariage, and  
your Husband? shee said, right euill,  
for yee haue ginen to me an old lame  
man to my discontentment in all respects,  
and I would you had the same  
time buried mee, for I had rather  
lye and eate with a swine, than with  
him, and therefore I may no longer  
thus endure, but I must needes loue  
another: then said the Mother, God  
forbid that my deare Daughter, how  
long time haue I been with your father  
& yet neuer hitherto haue I med-  
led with such foolishnes; the daughter  
sayd, Mother it is no maruaile,  
for you both met in your youth together,  
& the one took solace of y other,  
but I can receiue of him no manner  
of

Maisters.

of corporall pleasure, for he is cold &  
on the bed he lyeth as still as a stone,  
or as a thing immouable. The mo-  
ther answered, if you will loue ano-  
ther, tell me what he is: the Daugh-  
ter sayd, I will loue a Priest. To  
whome the mother sayd, it were bet-  
ter & lesse sin for you to loue a Knight  
or a Squier, than a Priest: nay, quoth  
the Daughter, if I should loue a  
Knight or a Squier, in short time he  
would be wearie of me, and after that  
hee would doe me shame, and so will  
not the Priest, for hee will hold and  
keepe his owne honour & counsell, as  
well as mine, also spirituall men be  
more true to their loues, than secular  
men be: the Mother said, heare my  
counsell, and it will bee good for you.  
Old folke are wyllie & fell, tempt your  
husband first, & if ye escape him with-  
out doing you harme or smiting, then  
loue the Priest. The Daughter said,  
I may not so long abide, The Mo-  
ther



The seuen wife

ther sayd, vpon my blessing abide till  
yee haue prooued him: the Daughter  
sayd, vppon your blessing I will  
abide so long till I haue attempted  
him, but first tell mee how that I  
shall prooue him: the Mother sayd,  
he hath in his Orchard a tree which  
he loueth much, cause it to be smitten  
downe while hee is out at hunting,  
and against his comming home make  
him a fire therewith, and if he forgiue  
it you, then may you surely loue the  
Priest. As shee heard that Coun-  
sell of her Mother, shee went home,  
to whome her Husband sayd, where  
haue you beene so long? shee an-  
swered, I haue been at the Church,  
where I met with my Mother, and  
with her I haue a little talked and  
communed, and so beganne properly  
for to dissemble: after Mid-day the  
Knight rode out for to hunt, then  
shee thinking vppon the counsaile of  
her Mother, went to the Gardiner,  
and

Maisters.

and sayd to him, cut downe this yong  
Tree newly Planted, that I may  
make a fier thereof to warme my  
LORD withall at his comming home  
from hunting, for it is a great wind  
and right sharpe cold : the Gardiner  
sayd, Madame that will I not doe,  
for my LORD loueth this Tree better  
than he doth all the other Trees, ne-  
uerthelesse I shall well helpe you to  
gather wood ynough for to make a  
good fier, but in any wise this I will  
not hewe downe. As she heard that,  
then bouldly shee tooke the Axe from  
the Gardener, and hewed downe the  
Tree her selfe, and made the Garde-  
ner with other to beare it home. At e-  
uening when her LORD came from  
hunting, he was very cold : and shee  
made a great fier, and went and met  
with him, and set him a stoole befoze  
the fier to warme him : and as hee a  
little while had sitten, he perceiued y  
odour of the fier, and called to him  
the

## The seuen wise

the Gardener and said, I feele by this  
odour, that the newe Plant burneth  
in the fire. The Gardiner said, Lord  
it is true, my Ladye your wife hath  
felled it downe: the Knight sayd to  
her, God forbid that my Plant should  
be cut downe by you; shee answered  
anon and sayd, Lord I haue done it,  
knowing the weather cold, & you also  
cold, and therefore I haue ordained  
this fier for your comfort. As the  
Knight heard that, he looked angerly  
vpon her, and sayd, O cursed woman,  
how wast thou so hardy as to helpe  
downe so gentle a young Tree, the  
which thou knowest well that I lo-  
ued aboue all my other Trees: when  
he had so said, she began to weep and  
excuse her selfe and said, my Lord, I  
haue done it for your good, and doe  
you take it so greuously, and began  
to crie woe, woe be to me: anon as the  
Knight sawe the weeping & teares of  
his wife, and heard her cause, he was  
moued

mooued with pittie, and said to her,  
cease of your weeping, and bewaile  
how that yee anger mee any more, or  
trouble mee in any thing that I lothe.

The next day early in the morning,  
she went againe to the churchyard, &  
met with her mother coming beane,  
and they saluted each other. Then  
the Daughter said to the Mother, ah  
deere Mother I will loue the Priest,  
for I haue attempted my Lord, as ye  
counsailed me, but all for nought, for  
hee anon forgaue it when he sawe me  
a little weep. Then said the Mother,  
though old men one time forgive, they  
double the paine another time, and  
therfore I counsaile you that you yet  
once againe attempt him.

Then said the Daughter, I may not  
any longer abide, for I suffer much  
paine for the loue of the Priest, that  
with my tongue I cannot tell, ther-  
fore yee shall pardon mee, I will no  
more follow or doe after your coun-  
sell:

## The seven wise

ce II: then said the mother, for the loue  
th at the Child should haue vnto the  
mother, attēpt him yet once more for  
your Fathers blessing, and then if yee  
goe quite without any harme or bea-  
ring, loue the Priest in the name of  
God. Then answered the Daughter  
it is to mee great paine so long time  
to abide, neuertheless for y<sup>e</sup> blessing of  
my Father I shal once more attempt  
him, but tell me how I shall begiune?  
the Mother sayd, I vnderstand that  
he hath a little hound that hee loueth  
well, & keepeth his bed, cast the hound  
with so great might befoze his face a-  
gainst the wall, that it die, and if yee  
scape without a stripe, or that he for-  
giue you it lightly, then in the name of  
God, loue the Priest. Then sayd the  
Daughter, I shall in all things doe  
after your counsaile, for there is no  
Daughter liuing at this day, that  
would more gladly haue the blessing  
of the Father and Mother, than I.  
And

Maisters.

And so she bad her Mother farewell,  
and went to her house againe, & that  
day with great importunitie & trou-  
ble of heart, shee brought to the night.  
And when the night was come, shee  
commaunded the bedde to be couered  
with purple and cloth of Gould,  
whiles the knight sate by the fier: &  
when the bed was thus made ready,  
the litle hound as he was accustomed  
leapt vpon the bed, and shee tooke  
him by the hinder legges, and with a  
wood and malicious heart she cast it  
against the wall that it lay still dead:  
when the good old knight saw that,  
he was maruailously angry, and said  
with a loud voice to his wife, O thou  
most cruell and spitefull of all wicked  
women, how couldest thou find in  
thine heart to kill that litle gentle  
hound that I loued so much: Lord  
sayd she, haue ye not seene how the  
hound with his feete (comming out  
of the myze) hath berayed our bedde  
that

### The seven wise

that is so preciouslly couered with rich  
cloathes ? and the Knight sayd with  
much anger, knew you not that I lo-  
ued much better my little Hound than  
the bed ? when she heard that, anon  
shee beganne pitiously to weepe, and  
sayd, woe be to mee that euer I was  
borne, for all things that I doe for  
the best, it is all turned into the worst.  
The Knight would not suffer the  
weeping and lamenting of his wife,  
but for that he loued her so much he  
sayd vnto her, cease your weeping, for  
I forgine it you altogether, and I  
counsaille you that yee beware how  
that ye displease me from henceforth,  
and so they went to bed together.

Upon the morrowe shee arose vp  
early and went to the Church where  
she met with her Mother, to whome,  
when shee had done reuerence as it  
behoued, shee sayd, Mother now  
will I loue the Priest, for I haue at-  
tempted my Husband the second time,  
and



and all things he hath suffered.

The mother said, O my deere daughter, there is no crueltie or falshood above the crueltie of ould folkes, and therefore I counsaile you, that you yet once prooue him, vnto whom the Daughter answered, Mother yee labour in vaine, for if ye wist what and how much paine that I suffer for the Priestis loue, yee should rather helpe me, if ye loued me. The Mother said, heare me daughter this one time, and I shall neuer let you moze. Thinke how you haue sucked milke out of my breasts, and the great paine that I suffered for you at your birth: by these paines my deare Daughter I desire and charge you, that ye deny me not this good petitiō, & I promise to God no moze to let you nor hinder you of your intent, but rather to helpe you thercto: then answered the Daughter it is to me a great paine to abstaine me, and to forbear my selfe so long

## The seuen wise

from the loue of the Priest, neuerthe-  
lesse for the great charge that ye haue  
layd to mee, and also for that ye haue  
made a vow no more for to let mee,  
but to further me, tell me how I shall  
attempt him, & I shall yet once more  
giue the aduventure. The mother said  
I know well that on Sunday next  
comming he intendeth to haue vs all  
to dinner, and there shall be your fa-  
ther and I, and all our friends, with  
all the best of the City: and when you  
are set in your place, & all the meates  
are brought and serued vppon the ta-  
ble, fasten on the keyes priuily that  
hang at your girdle in the table cloth  
and then doe you faine to haue for-  
gotten your knife, & say these words,  
openly: see what a short wit that I  
am off, I haue forgotten my knife  
in my chamber, and then rise vp hasti-  
ly and goe, and the Cloth with all  
the meates yee shall cast downe and  
ouerthrow vpon the ground, and if  
yee

Maisters.

yee escape without paine, I make a  
 vowe to God, that I shall neuer let  
 you after. The Daughter sayd, that  
 shall I gladly doe, and so tooke her  
 leaue and departed. The Feast day  
 came, & all as the Mother sayd were  
 bidden, the seruants made ready and  
 couered the table, all were set at the  
 table, & the daughter sat ouer against  
 her Lord: and when the table was  
 well serued with meates and other  
 things thereto belonging, the Ladie  
 of the house sayd with a high voyce,  
 see how forgetfull I am, I haue left  
 my knife in my Chamber, which I  
 must fetch, & so rose vp hastily, & drew  
 the cloth with al þe meat vpon it with  
 her, and al the gold vessels and salts  
 lay vpon the ground: the Knight wax=  
 ed soze angry in hart, but he for shame  
 dissembled befoze his guests, and co=  
 maunded another cleane Cloth, and  
 other meates to be brought, and with  
 ioy and mirth hee saluted his guests,  
 to

## The seuen wise

to eate & make good cheere, that by him they were all made merrie. The feast or Dinner done, they gaue all thanks to the knight, and took their leaues and departed euerie man towards his owne howse: vpon the next day in the morning the knight arose early and went to the Church, and heard seruice, after which he went to a Barbour, and sayd vnto him, Sir, are you expert in blood-letting in what vaine that I will desire you? he sayd, Sir I am expert in what vaine that yee can name in a mans bodie. The knight sayd, I am well content come with me, & when he was come to his house, he entred into his chamber where his wife lay in bed, & sayd to her rise vp shortly, then sayd shee, what shall I doe vp so early, it is not yett ix. of the clocke: the knight sayd, you must rise vp, for you must bee letten blood on both your armes: She sayd, I was neuer letten blood, and

Maisters.

and shall I now blede : then sayd the  
 Knight that is troth, and therefore  
 yee are a foole : remember ye not that  
 first ye hewed down my Tree, and a-  
 nother time ye killed my little hound,  
 and yester day ye shamed me afore all  
 our friends and Parents, and the  
 fourth is, if I should suffer you thus  
 to goe forth, yee should for ever con-  
 found and shame me : the cause hereof  
 I consider, that ye haue euill & wild  
 blood within your body, and therefore  
 I will that the corrupt blood shall be  
 drawne out, that ye from henceforth  
 shal no more put me to shame and an-  
 ger, and so caused to be made a great  
 fier and she stood & cried, & held vp her  
 handes towards Heauen, and sayd,  
 My Lord forgiue this Trespasse,  
 and haue pitie vppon me at this time  
 and I shall neuer more offend you.  
 The knight said, pray for no mercy,  
 for y<sup>e</sup> mercy that God hath wrought  
 towards thee at this present, is this,  
 that

### The seuen wife

that except thou holdest out thine arme straight, I shall soone haue thy heart blood, & he said also to the Barboz, smite hard & make a deepe hole in her arme, or else I shall giue you a great stripe: then smote the Barboz so sore that the blood came abundantly out, & the Knight would not suffer him to staunch it, vntill the time that she chaunged colour in her visage, and as this was done, hee had it to bee stopped, & willed the Barboz to smite the baine vppon the other arme, then cryed she with a very loud voyce, My sweet husband, I pray you haue compassion vppon me, for now I die: the Knight answered, wife ye should haue thought vpon this before, ere you had done to me these three euill torments or despights: then she heid out her left arme, and then the Barbour smote therein an hole, that the bloud came out right vgly, and hee suffered her to bleed vnto the time that the colour in  
her

Maisters.

her visage changed, & that she swooned:  
then said the Knight, now bind  
the arme and stanch it, and said to her  
now goe to bed and study, and thinke  
henceforth how you may amend your  
selfe, or else I shall draw the blood of  
your heart: and as this was done, he  
gaue the Barbour his reward, and  
then he went againe vnto his owne  
house: and his wife vnder the hands  
of her maidens nigh dead, was led to  
her bed, she bad one of her Maidens  
goe to her Mother in all hast, and say  
that I desire her to come speake with  
mee befoze I die: the Mother when  
she had heard that, was glad of the  
correction of her Daughter, and came  
hastily to her. When the Daughter  
hard her Mother, she said, O my most  
sweete Mother, I am almost dead,  
for I haue bled so much bloud, that I  
beleuee I shall not escape the death.  
Then answered the Mother, sayde  
I not vnto you, that ould men are  
right



## The seuen wise

right cruell and fell, will ye now loue the Priest? She said, the Diuell may the priest confound and shame, I will neuer oue other but my Husband, the said the Maister to the Emperour, Lord haue ye vnderstood me? and he answered, right well, for amongst all other that euer I haue heard, this was the best example. Three euill deedes she did to her husband, and I doubt no. but if shee had done the fourth, shee should haue shamed him for euer. Then said the Maister, therefore I counsaile you that yee beware of your wife, least it happen worse to you, for whv, if you put to death your onely Sonne for her words, you shal be deceiued in the end, and for euer ye shall repent it. The Emperour sayd, truely Maister this day my Son shal not die. The Maister said, my Lord I thanke you, that ye for mine example and my sake this day haue spared your Sonne.

The

Maisters.

The Fift Complaint of  
the Emperresse.

**T**he Emperresse hearing that the  
Child was not yet dead, forth=  
with apparelled her selfe, and  
caused her Waynes and Cartes to be  
in a readinesse, as though she would  
haue gone home into her Countrey to  
her Father, for to haue complayned  
of the great shame that was done vn=  
to her, and yet could haue no remedie  
thereof. The Seruants seeing that,  
went and shewed to the Emperour,  
that the Emperresse was going into  
her Countrey: when he perceued that,  
hee went to her saying, whither are  
you going?

I hoped that you had loued me so  
much, that in all the world ye would  
haue sought no solace but with mee.  
To that she said, that is true, & ther=  
fore I goe from you, for I had ra=  
ther heare of your death, than to see  
you die, without doubt yee delight so  
much

John ffylde

## The seuen wise

much to heare these Maisters, that it shall happen vnto you as it did vnto Octavian the Emperour, the which was so couetous, that the noble men of the Empire buried him quick, and filled his mouth with moulten gold. The Emperour said, deere wife doe not so, that another time the blame to you or mee might be layd. Then said the Emperesse, truely the blame is yours, for haue you not promised me many times that your son should die, and yet he liueth: and therefore from henceforth I wil no more beleue you. Then said the Emperour, it becometh not a King euerie cause lightly to discusse without aduise, & especially vpon his Sonne, vpon whome it is not meete lightly to giue iudgement, and therefore I save and pray you, that ye will tell me somewhat by the which I may gouerne my selfe: for it is the vtter destruction of a King, withoue aduise, and vndiscreetly to giue

Maisters.

giue Iudgement, she answered and said, I will gladly tell you a notable example, so that from hencefoorth pee will not bee couetous oz Desirous to heare the Maisters: and began to say in this fourme.

The fift Example of  
the Empreſſe

O Crauiantus the Emperour raigned in Roome right rich and couetous, and aboue all things he loued Gould. The Citizens of Rome that time did much harne, and many great outrages to other Nations, insomuch that diuers Nations and Regions were mooued and stirred against the Romanes. In that time there was Maister Virgilius the which excelled in magicke & in other Sciences all other Maisters: the Citizens praied him that hee by his Art and cunning would deuise somewhat by the which they of their enemies might haue warning & knowledge before hand.

¶

where

## The seven wise

wherby that they might prouide for  
themselves the better. Hee made by  
his Art and cunning a tower, and  
about vppon the tower did cause to  
bee set as many Images as in all the  
world were Regions and prouinces;  
and in the middest of the tower he let  
to be made and set, an Image which  
held in his hand an Apple or a great  
round ball of gould. And euerie I=  
mage of the tower held in his hand  
a litle bell, and stood turning and loo=  
king towards his owne Prouince to  
him assigned : and as often times as  
any Prouince would stirre and rebell  
against the Romaines, so often tur=  
ned him the Image of the Land, and  
rang the Bell: That hearing, the Ci=  
tizens of Roome armed themselves,  
and to that Prouince hastest with all  
their might, the same to subdue :  
and so was there no Land so great  
that could weake them vppon the  
Romaines, and therefore were they  
dread

Maisters.

bread and feared ouer all the world.  
 Also that Maister Virgill made for  
 the solace and comfort of the pooze  
 people, a Light that alway burned,  
 & by that light he made two Bathes,  
 the one of them hotte, in the which  
 the pooze people might bath & wash  
 themselues: and the other cold, in  
 the which they might themselues re=  
 fresh. Betwixt that Light and the  
 Baths, he made an Image standing,  
 in whose forehead was written, hee  
 that smiteth mee, shall anone haue  
 vengeance. The Image stode  
 there many yeares, at the last there  
 came a Clarke & beheld the Image, &  
 read this writing, & thought in him=  
 selfe, what vengeance hee might  
 finde therefore: I beleue better that  
 if any man should smite thee, and that  
 thou fallest therewith to the earth,  
 hee should finde some treasure vnder  
 thy feete, and therefore is thy wri=  
 ting that no man should haue it, And

### The seven wise

the Clarke lift vp his hand and gaue the Image a great stroake that it fell on the ground, and anon the light was out, and the Bathes were vanished away, & hee found no Treasure. The poore folk perceiuing that, were all sorrowfull, saying, cursed might he be for euer more, that for his singuler couetousnesse hath destroyed this Image, and hath robbed vs of so gret solace and comfort: heereafter assembled thre Kinges, the which of the Romaines had beene oppzelled, and suffered great wrongs, and went to Counsell with them of their Counsel, how they might best of the Romaines be auenged, and some of them sayd, we labour in vaine; as long as there standeth the tower with the Images we may doe nothing against them.

To the Counsaile arose vp foure Knights and said to the Kinges, we haue thought on a good remedie, how ye shall destroye the Tower with the Images,



Maisters.

Images, & that to doe and bring about, wee will our liues set to pledge if that you will do the cost. Then said the king, what cost shall we do: they sayd, we must haue foure Tunnes of Goud. Then said the king, take the Goud and fulfill your promise: the Knights tooke the Goud and went towards Roome, and when they were thether come, in the night without one of the Gates, in the Ditch with water they drowned one of the Tunnes with the Goud, and another tun they drowned by the second gate, and the third Tun they drowned by the third gate, & the fourth tun by the fourth gate they drowned: and when they had this done, early in the Morning they entred into the Cittie at an houre conuenient when the Emperour went ouer to the Mart, and did him reuerence as it behoued. The Emperour seeing them, demaunded from whence they were, of what science, & what

## The seuen wise

What Service they could Doe : they answered, wee are of farre Countreys, and Soothsayers so perfect, that there was neuer thing so priuily and secretly hid, but that we shall finde it by our dreames. Wee haue heard that yee labour and haue pleasure in such thinges, and therefore came we vnto you to know if yee had any need of our service. The Emperour sayd, I shall proue you, and if it be so that I finde you true, you shall haue of me great rewards & thanks. They sayd, we aske nothing for our labours, but the halfe Deale of the Gould that by vs shall bee found : the Emperour sayd, I am very well content, and thus they had with the Emperour many wordes. At euen when y<sup>e</sup> Emperour was going to bed, they said vnto him, My lord if it please you this night shall the oldest of vs set his cunning a worke, and dreame the thirde day wee shall shew you his dreame

Dreamer, and what it signifieth: the  
Emperour said, go in gods name. And  
they went forth with great gladnes,  
and all y<sup>e</sup> night they passed ouer with  
much ioy and mirth, vpon trust that  
they should come to a good purpose.  
When the third day was come, they  
went early to the Emperour, the first  
of them said, my Lord, please it you  
to goe with vs without one of the  
gates of the Cittie, and I shall shew  
you where a tun full of gould is hid,  
the Emperour sayd I shall goe with  
you and see if it be true that you say.  
When they were come to the place,  
they drew out the tunne that they be-  
foze there hadde put, the Emperour  
when hee sawe that was glad, and  
gaue to them their part. Then sayd  
the second Dreamer, My Lord, this  
night shall I dreame: the Emperour  
sayd, God gine you a good Dreame.  
The next night came, and hee tooke  
out the other Tun, and gaue it to the

### The seven wise

Emperour, and tooke also his share, in like wise did the third & the fourth, vppon the which the Emperour was out of all measure ioyous & glad, and sayd, he had not seene afore such true & expert Soothsayers or Dreamers as they were, then sayd they altogether at once, as it had been out of one mouth. My Lord, we haue one after another dreamed, the which as yee haue seen they be all true proued, but nowe if it please you that wee may Dreame all together this night, wee trust that to vs shalbe shewed where we shall finde a great quantitie and substance of Golde and of riches: the Emperour sayd, God giue to you a good Dreame, which to me and to you may be profitable. On the next morrow they came againe vnto the Emperour, and said to him with ioyous and glad Visages and countenances My Lord, we bring good and profitable tydings, for this night in our sleepes

Maisters.

sleepes, such & so great Treasure is  
to vs shewed, the which if you will  
suffer it to be sought, you shall bee so  
much enriched, that in this world  
shall bee none lyke you: the Emperour  
sayd, where should wee finde this  
Treasure: they sayd vnder the foun-  
dation of the Tower that y<sup>e</sup> Images  
stand vppon. The Emperour answe-  
red, God defend that I should for loue  
of gold destroy y<sup>e</sup> Tower with Ima-  
ges, wherewith we of our enemies  
bee defended and warned: they sayd  
to him againe, My Lord, haue yee  
found vs in our saynges otherwise  
than true and rightfull. The Em-  
perour sayd, nay: O Lord sayd they,  
we with our owne handes shall giue  
out the Gould, without hurting of  
the Tower or y<sup>e</sup> Images. And it is  
expedient, that secretly in y<sup>e</sup> night, by  
vs it bee done, for dread of resort, &  
concourse of the people, least that ye  
should run in the noise and clamours  
of

The seven wise

of them, and also that they should not take that good gold away from you and vs. The Emperour said, goe in the name of god and doe your best, as you well can, and I shall to morrow early come to you. Then went they with ioy and gladnesse, & in the night they were let into the Tower, and with great hast & diligence they vndermined it, and in the next day early they mounted vppon their horses, and rode againe towarde their owne Country with ioy and glozy, & ere that they came without the sight of Rome, the Tower fell down on the morning ensuing. When it was fallen & the Senatozs it perceiued, they sorrowed greatly, and there was great bewailing throughout all the Citie, and they went to the Emperoz and said, lord how may it be that this tower is thus fallen, by the which we haue alwayes had warning afore of our enemies: he answered and said,  
to

Maiſters.

to me came foure falſe Deceiuers, and  
ſayned themſelues to be Soothſay-  
ers, and that they could finde Treas-  
ure in the ground. And they ſayd,  
that vnder the foundation of the  
Tower was hidden an innumerable  
Summe of Gould, the which they  
ſhould vndermine without hurting  
of the Tower or the Images, and I  
gaue faith to them, and they haue de-  
ceiued mee. They answered him. ye  
haue coueted ſo much Gould, and for  
your ſatiate couetouſneſſe, wee ſhall  
be all deſtroyed, but firſt your coue-  
touſneſſe ſhall fall vppon your ſelfe:  
they took and led him to the Capitol,  
and layd him on his back and poured  
his mouth full of moulten gould, ſay-  
ing to him, you haue deſired gold, and  
therfore ye ſhall drinke gold, and after  
they buried him quicke. Not long  
after that, came the enemies againſt  
the Romaynes, and ouercame & de-  
ſtroyed them all. Then ſaid the Em-  
preſſe



### The seuen wife

presse vnto the Emperoz, haue ye my  
Lord this Example well vnderstood,  
and he said, right well: then said she,  
the Tower with y Images is your  
body and fiue witts. As long as  
you doe liue, there is none so hardy  
to trouble oz make warre vpon you,  
noz vpon your people, that hath your  
son right well vnderstood, who with  
his seuen Maisters, and with their  
false narrations of fables, seek how  
they may destroy you: for you are o-  
uer much couetous to heare and in-  
cline to them, and insomuch that they  
shall vndermine you, and cast you  
vnder foot and bring you to nought.  
The Images are your fiue witts,  
that be all lost. And for as much as  
you bee so Childish and foolish, they  
shall destroye and slay you, and your  
Sou shall obtaine your Empire. The  
Emperour said, ye haue recited to me  
a good example, wherefore it shal not  
happen to me as it did with the tow-  
er,

Maiſters.

er, but my Some firſt this day ſhall  
bee hanged, to whome the Emperreſſe  
ſaid, if ye doe ſo, ye ſhall fare well, and  
liue long. Uppon the third day, hee  
commaunded him to be led to hang-  
ing, and as he was led towards the  
Gallowes, came riding againſt him  
vppon an Horſe, his fiſt Maiſter to-  
wards the Pallace, and came beſore  
the Emperour, and ſaluted him with  
all reuerence, and he deſpised his ſa-  
lutation, and put him in feare of his  
life. And the Maiſter ſaid, My lord  
I haue not deſerued to die, and ſoz to  
deſpiſe my ſalutatio, it is not ſoz your  
honour, ſoz your Son hath not with  
vs been of ſuch conditions as yee re-  
pute him, as yee in ſhort time ſhall  
finde: & that he ſpeaketh not is of his  
great wiſdome, & know ye y he ſhall  
well ſpeake as time cometh, though  
that hee now ſpeaketh not, as you in  
ſhort time ſhall heare: but ye ſay that  
hee would haue ſhamed your wife,  
that

### The seuen wise

that beliene not, for so a wise man as he is, should neuer attempt so shamefull a deed, and if ye put him to death for your wiues wordes, yee should not escape without shame and vengeance like as Ippocras escaped not without vengeance for the death of Gallienus his Cozen: the Emperour sayd, that would I faine heare and vnderstand. Then said the Maister, what should auaile to tell you this narration for your profite, if in the mean season your Sonne shall die, & therefore if ye will call again your Son, it shall be done at your pleasure, and after do as you thinke best. The Emperour bad call againe his Sonne, & let him in prison, and then began the Maister to tell on this manner as followeth.

#### The Example of the fifth

#### Maister.

**S**ometime there was a famous Philisition named Ippocras, right cunning, the which excelled all other

Maisters,

other in cunning and Science; hee  
had with him his Nephewe or Kins-  
man that was called Galienus; the  
whiche hee loued much: this Galienus  
was of an excellent wit, and applyed  
all his minde and wit to learne of his  
vncke the Science of Physicke. When  
Ippocras perceiued that, in as much  
as he could, he hid from him his cun-  
ning, fearing that hee should excell  
him in that Craft for the great witte  
that hee was of. As Galienus sawe  
this, hee studied and exercised, in so  
much that in short time hee had per-  
fect Cunning in Physicke, for the  
whiche Ippocras envied him much.  
It happened vppon a time thereaf-  
ter, that the King of Hungarie sent  
his Messenger vnto Ippocras, that  
hee should come vnto him for to cure  
his Sonne: Ippocras excused himselfe  
and would not goe, but sent his Co-  
zen Galienus with his Letters of ex-  
cuse for his not comming. And when  
Galienus

## The seven wise.

Galienus was come before the king, hee was right worshipfully receaued, but they marvelled why that Ippocras would not come, hee excused him, saying, that hee had many great thinges to doe, and hee might not come, but hee hath sent mee in his stead, and with the helpe of God I shall make whole the Childe, that pleased very well the king. Galienus went to the Childe, and when he had seene his Urine, and tasted his pounces, hee sayd to the Queene, O excellent Princeesse, I pray you heare and suffer my wordes, and tell mee who is the father of the Child? shee sayd, who should be his father but my lord the king? Galienus sayd, I am sure that hee is not the father, shee answered, if ye will say that for a troth, I shall cause your head to bee smitten off: he answered, I say once againe, that this king is not the father

ther; and I am not therefore come  
 hether to loose my head, for I haue  
 not deserued any such reward, and so  
 was going his way. The Queene  
 spake, O good Maister Galienus, if  
 ye will keepe it secret, and not disco-  
 uer mee, I shall shew and open vnto  
 you my heart. The Maister said, God  
 defend that from mee, that I to any  
 person should shewe it, and therefore  
 O noble Queene shew it boldly to me,  
 for it shall neuer passe my mouth, and  
 afterwards I shall ease & make your  
 Son whole: shee sayd, if ye doe that,  
 ye shall haue a good reward of mee, &  
 therefore heare what I shall say. By  
 fortune came hither vnto my Lord,  
 the King of Burgundie, and he was  
 so long conuersant with me, that this  
 child by him I bare: then said the ma-  
 ster, feare ye not, I knew that it was  
 so before, and anon he gaue the Child  
 to eat beefe, oz of an Ore, and drinke,  
 and the Child was eased of his infir-  
 mitie.

## The seven wise

mitie. And when as the King heard that the child was quite of his maladie, he gaue vnto the Maister a good reward, but of the Queene hee secretly receiued a great giift and a special thanke, and so went his way. And when that hee was come home, Ippocras his Maister demaunded of him saying, haue ye beheld the Child? and he sayd yea, then asked he him what he gaue him, flesh or beefe to eate, and water to drinke. Then sayd Ippocras the woman of the Child is not true to her husband, that is troth said Galienus: then Ippocras was mooued with ennie, and thought in himselfe, if here he not found a remedie, my Science shall no more be let by, and he shall be named and praised aboue mee. And from that day forward, he bethought him and deuised how hee might slay him. Upon a day Ippocras called him and sayd, come go we to seeke and gather heebs in the Garden, to whom hee



hee sayd, Maister I am readye: and  
when they were come into the Gar-  
den, Ippocras sayd, I feele that this  
herbe is right vertuous, stoop down  
gather me of it, Galienus did so. Als  
they went about the Garden, said Ip-  
pocras, now I well perceine the odour  
of this heathe, that it is better and  
purer then Goud. and therefore  
stoop downe to the ground, & draw  
him out with the roots, for it is worth  
worth: Galienus bowed downe him-  
selfe to pull up the heath, and Ippocras  
drew out his knife and killed him,  
After that, Ippocras fell sicke to death,  
that the strength of his bodie fayled  
him, and did as much as hee could to  
helpe himselfe, but it would not be,  
and as the Schollers and Disciples  
heard of it, they went hastily to him,  
and all that they might or could doe,  
for the profite of his health, they did,  
but it availed him nothing.

When Ippocras this perceined,

## The fouen wise

he said vnto his Schollers, goe fetch  
me a great Tunne, and fill it full vnto  
the brimmes with water, and when  
they had so done, he sayd vnto them,  
make now therein a hundred holes,  
and when that was also done, there  
went none of the water out. Then  
said Ippocras, behold my most deere  
Disciples how that the vengeance  
of God is fallen vpon mee, as we  
openly may see, for in this Tunne are  
an hundred holes, & yet goeth there-  
out not one drop: right so there com-  
meth no victorie out of the heathens to  
helpe me, and therefore what you doe  
vnto me helpeth not, for I must die  
but my deere children, if my Nephew  
Galenus were now alitie, hee coulde  
heale mee, whome I haue slaine, and  
that greueth mee sore, and therefore  
the vengeance of God commeth vpon  
mee. And this sayd, hee turned  
him to the wall & gaue vnto the Ghost.  
Then said the Master vnto the Em-  
perour,

Perone, my Lord vnderstand yee well  
what I haue sayd, hee answered, yee  
right well, what hurt had it becom to  
him, if Galienus had liued?

The Master answered, it had been  
right good for Ippocras at that time,  
had not he dyed, & therefore by right  
wise iudgement of god, his medicines  
suiled him not, & therefore I shewed  
to you, that it shall happen worse to  
you, if that you put to death your son  
for the wordes of your wife, who  
in time of necessitie shall assist and suc-  
cure you: and consider ye not, that ye  
haue after your first wife wedded this  
wife that ye now haue, and so ye may  
the third and fourth, and neuer shall  
ye haue of any of them such a Sonne,  
that shall keepe and saue you from pe-  
ril? the Emperour sayd, truly he  
shall not die.

Then sayd the Master, then doe  
ye wisely, and I commend you to God,  
and I thanke you, that yee haue this

The seven wise

day for me spared your son. The Emperour sayd, I marke this well, that women are craftie and subtil, therefore I will not for you, but for my selfe, saue him.

The Sixt Complaint of the  
Empresse.

When as the Empresse had know-  
ledge thereof, shee bewebbed her selfe  
sofroward & impatient a body, that all  
that sawe her or heard her, would  
and sayd to the Emperour, your wife  
she pineth her selfe, as though she would  
die. The Emperour hearing thereof,  
went to her and said, whereloe bee  
yee so impatient: she answered, say-  
ing, O Lord how should I hold it  
in when I am the onely Daughter of  
a King, & your wife & in your compa-  
nie I haue had a great dispyght and  
shame, & continually yee haue promi-  
sed me to punish him, but ye performe  
it not. The Emperour said, I doe not  
what I shall doe ye labour from day  
to.

to depart, that shee be not therewith  
 ashamed. The King answered, I say  
 to you for a troth, shee shall not yet  
 depart, for her companie is unto mee  
 right pleasant and acceptable. The  
 Steward hearing that, could no longer  
 get forbear nor hold his owne coun-  
 cell, but said to the King, O my good  
 and gracious Lord I beseech you suf-  
 fer her to depart, for it is my owne  
 wille. The King hearing that, sayd to  
 him, open the window. And when  
 it was open, the faire and bright day  
 appeared, he beheld the woman right  
 faire & goodly, and perceiued that it  
 was the wife of the Steward, & sayd  
 to him, O thou most worst Ribaud or  
 knaue, why hast thou for so little mo-  
 ney shamed and vndeined thy good and  
 faire wife, and her hast deliuered vnto  
 me vniwitting: therefore hast thee  
 and get thee gone out of my Realme,  
 and neuer more hereafter come in my  
 sight, for from henceforth, if euer I  
 may

The seven wise

may see thee, thou shalt die the most  
shamefull and horriblest death that  
euer can be imagined. When the Ste-  
ward heard that, he fled his way, and  
durst not abide, & was neuer so hardy  
any more to come into the Realme.  
And the King kept that wife all his  
life time in great worship, & gaue to  
her plentie of all thinges that to her  
behooned and pertained.

After that, the King caused to be ga-  
thered and assembled a great & migh-  
tie Armie of puissant men of warre,  
and so he went to Roome with great  
might, and besieged the Cittie on all  
sides, so long untill the Romaynes  
would haue deliuered him for to haue  
departed, and withdraue himselfe  
from thence, the bodies of the holie A-  
postles Peter and Paule.

Then was there in the Cittie seven  
wise Masters as ye haue now, by the  
councell of whome all the Cittie was  
guided and gouerned. And the Citi-  
zens



to day to haue my Sonne to die: and the Maisters labour to saue his life: and amongst all these I know well that he is my Sonne, but where the troth is that I know not. Then said she, this is the cause whereof I complaine, that ye beleue the Maisters, more than you do me, therefore it shal happen to you as it did to aking with his Steward. Then sayd the Emperour, tel that example, peraduerure it may mooue me the sooner to put my sonne to death: she sayd gladly, but I pray you giue attendance to what I shall say, and began to tell as hereafter ensueth.

The sixt Example of the  
Empresse.

**T**here was a king right proud & maruailously deformed in his visage, in such wise, that women hated and abhorred him.

This king thought to destroy Rome and to slay y<sup>e</sup> Romaines, and to take



### The tenen wife

and carrie away the bodies of Peter  
and Paule : who while hee was in  
this minde, called to him his Ste-  
ward that was right secret with him  
of his priuie counsell, and said to him,  
goe and seeke me a faire woman, that  
this night may sleepe with mee. The  
Steward answered, My Lord, wee  
knowe well your infirmitie and dis-  
ease, and that no woman will doe e-  
uill without a great summe of mony.  
The King said, think ye that for mo-  
ney, I will want one : Haue I not  
Gold and siluer ynough : though it  
were a M. florens, I would it glad-  
ly giue. The Steward hearing that,  
was anon smitten with couetousnes;  
& went to his owne wife which was  
right faire and chaste, & of good kindred,  
and said to her, O my good wife, my  
Lord desireth & coueteth for to sleepe  
with a faire and beautifull woman,  
and will not forbeare it, though that  
he should aske of him a M. florens,  
and

and hath commaunded me to prouide him of one, and therefore I counsaile you, that ye to vs get this money: the wife said, were it not so that the King were so proude and foule of visage, yet would I not to that euill consent, for the sin against God. The Steward answered, I consent that ye shall doe it, and thereto I counsaile and commaund you, & promise you, that without yee consent to me herein, yee shall neuer haue good day with mee: shee hearing that trembled, insomuch that for dread shee consented to him.

The Steward then went to the King & sayd, Sir, I haue found out a faire woman, and she is come of a verie good house, which will not lesse haue than a M. flozens, and in the Euening shee shall come, and early in the Mornning she must away, that she be not seen of the people: the King answered and said, I am well content. When the night was come, the Steward

The seven wise

ward led his wife to the Kings bed:  
 & made fast the doze & went his way:  
 early in the Morning the Steward  
 arose and went to the King and said,  
 My Lord, it will bee day within a  
 while, it is good that you perfourme  
 your promise, and let the woman go:  
 the King said, this woman pleaseth  
 me so well, that so soone she shall not  
 depart from me. When he heard that,  
 he departed thence all sozrie, wherby  
 he carried any while, but came to the  
 King againe and said, my lord y<sup>e</sup> mor-  
 ning is come, therefore let the woman  
 go as I haue promised her, least that  
 she be ashamed: the King said, yet shal  
 she not goe from me, & therfore go out  
 & shut the doze again. The Steward  
 right sorowfull departed, and went  
 vp and downe with an heatie and an  
 angry heart, till that the faire and the  
 cleare day appeared, and then he en-  
 tred again into y<sup>e</sup> chamber & said, my  
 lord it is cleare day, saith: the woman  
 to

Maisters.

gens came to them and said, what shall we doe? it behooueth vs that we deliuer vnto your deadly enemies, the bodie of the holy Apostles, or else the Citie. Then answered the first Maister, I shall with my wife, dome and cunning this day saue the Citie, and the bodie of the Apostles, and so one after another promised to doe the same: and so euerie of them for one day, in like wise as the Maisters haue promised your Son. With that the King began to assault the Citie on all parts: then began the first Maister to say and alleadge so wisely for to haue peace, that the King that day left his assault, and withdrew himselfe a little from the Citie, and so did all the Maisters one after another, till the last. Vnto whome came the Burgesles & sayd, O Maister ye shal vnderstand that the King hath made his oath swozn, that to morrow with all his puissance and strength hee will haue

## The seven wise

haue winthe Citie, or else we must  
all be in leopardie to loose our liues;  
therefore in acquiting of your promise,  
defend and keepe vs from daunger;  
like as all our fellowes before you  
haue done. Then answered the Ma-  
ster and sayd, be of good comfort and  
feare not, for to morrowe I shall by  
my cunning shew such a worke and  
operation, that the King with all his  
puissance and might shall fyre away &  
leave the Siege. The next day the  
king made a gaue great assault vnto  
the Citie: then went the Master and  
cloathed himselfe with manye lous  
strange pecture, hauing therin the  
feathers of the tayles of Peacocks,  
and of other fowles of diuers co-  
lours, and tooke two bright swords  
in each hand one, and went therewith  
and stood vpon the highest Tower of  
all the Citey, and began to moue and  
turne or shewe himselfe about on all  
parts towards the Host, so that they  
might

Maisters,

might all behold and see him : and he  
held in his mouth the twoo bright  
Swords that maruailously shyned,  
they without of the Kings Host that  
beholding, sayd to him, O Lord be-  
hold vpon the hyst of yonder towres  
a wounderful thing or a figure, yea I  
see it well that it is maruailous, but  
what it is I know not, they sayd, it  
is Iesus the God of Christian folke,  
that is come out of heauen vs to slay  
and destroy with his two swords, if  
we any longer abide, The King hea-  
ring that, trembled for feare, and said  
what shall we doe : there is but one  
way, and that is, that we anon goe  
and depart fro hence, least that their  
God abenge himselfe vppon vs : then  
began the King with all his Host to  
flye : notwithstanding there was no  
need, but that they of the massie were  
beguiled & deceiued. And whē the Ro-  
maines saw that, they hastily pursued  
after, all armed in good ordinaunce, &  
the

## The seuen wise

the King with many of his people they killed and destroyed, and also in that manner by great subtiltie of the Maister was the mightie King with his Armie subdued. Then said the Emperesse to the Emperour, Lord ye haue vnderstoode what I haue said, he sayd yea, verie well in the best wise. She sayd, now yee haue heard what I haue sayd to you at the beginning of this narration of the steward that the King trusted so much, which for couetousnes of gold shamed his owne wife, and he for that was driven and banished out of the Land: In like manner your Son for the desire & appetite that he hath to the Empire, intendeth to confound and destroy you. But whyles you be in your might and power, doe with him as the King did with his Steward: if yee will not put him to death, banish him out of your Empire, that yee without feare may liue in suerty of your life. And haue



Maisters.

haue ye not also heard, how the King  
lay before the Citie of Rome, and how  
he was by the wise Maisters Deceiued  
& scorned, that he with his folke were  
killed and slaine : In the same wise  
the seuen Maisters intend to do with  
you, and by their false wiles and sub-  
tilties to deceiue you, and in the end  
to slay you, that your son may raigne.  
Whereupon answered the Emperour,  
and sayd, that shall not so be, for my  
son to morrow shall die. Then he com-  
manded his seruants that they should  
lead his son to hanging. When the  
people heard that, there was a great  
noise and gathering of them, together  
bewailing the death of the Empe-  
rours Sonne: and as the first Maister  
heard that, he hasted him to the Em-  
perour, and saluted him honourably,  
but hee tooke it vnthankfully, and  
threatned him that hee should die  
with his Sonne. for that hee was  
with them made dumme, and a Ry-  
baud,

### The seven wise

band, which was shewed towards his wife. The Maister sayd, I haue not deserued to die with your Son, but to haue great and large gifts, for he is not dum, as ye shall heare within thre dayes if he may liue so long : But if you put him to death for the words of your wife, then shall I maruaille at your wisdom, and without doubt it shall happen to you, as sometime it happened to a Knight that much allowed y<sup>e</sup> sayings of his wife, that he was bound to an Horse taylor, and drawne throughout all the Citie to the gallows. The Emperour sayd for y<sup>e</sup> loue of God shew me that example, that I may the better beware of that perill : that will I not doe sayd the Maister, without you doe call againe your son : then he commaunded to call his Sonne, and the Maister began as followeth.

The Example of the sixt  
Maister.

Some

Maisters.

Sometime there was an Emperoz  
of Rome which had thzee knights  
whome hee loued aboue all other.  
And in the same Littie was an an-  
cient knight, that had wedded a faire  
young wife, as you doe the Empzees,  
which aboue all other things hee lo-  
ued: this Ladie could sing right well  
and melodiously, & with such sweet-  
nesse, that many drew to her house,  
and desired her companie. It befell  
vpon a season, as she sat at her house,  
her Usage turned into the Street,  
that she might see thē that went by,  
and began sweetly to sing, that all  
folke delighted to heare her. By  
chaunce came that wayes a knight  
of the Emperours Court, that heard  
her voyce, and beholding her atten-  
tively, hee was taken in her loue, and  
entred into her house, and fell in com-  
munication with her of loue, and a-  
mongst all other talke he demaunded  
what hee should giue her to sleepe by  
her

## The seuen wise

her one night, she answered, an Hundred florens. The knight said, tell mee when I shall come, & I will giue you an hundred florens. She said, when I haue convenient time I shall send for you : the next day shee sang againe in the same place and it fortuned the second knight of the Emperour to come by that same way, the which likewise was smitten in her loue, and he also promised her a Hundred florens. To whome also shee promised to shew him a tune promised. The third day was the third knight in like wise caught in her loue, the which also promised her an Hundred florens, and shee to giue him knowledge of the time. These thre knights haue so secretly spoken with the Ladie, that none of them had knowledge of other. The Ladie that was malicious and deceitfull, came to her Husband, and sayd, Sir I haue a secret matter to shew

shew you, wherein if you follow my  
counsaile, our necessitie and pouerty  
ye may largely relieue. The Knight  
sayd, tell it me, & I will hold it secret,  
and fulfill it to my power: shee sayd,  
Thre Knights of the Emperours  
Court haue been with me one after a-  
nother, in such wise, that none know-  
eth of anothers counsell, & euerie one  
hath offered me a C. flozens: might  
we thre C. flozens get, & no know-  
ledge thereof detected, should it not  
be to vs a great helpe, and our pouer-  
tie be well releued? The Knight said  
forsooth yes, & therfore whatsoener  
you counsaile me to doe, I shall fol-  
low it. Then sayd shee, I shall giue  
you this counsaile, when they come  
with the flozens, ye shal stand behind  
the gate with your Sword drawn  
in your hand, and because that euery  
of them cometh alone, ye shall slay one  
after another, & so wee shall haue the  
3. C. flozens of them without know-  
ledge

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### The seven wise

ledge of any other. The knight answered, O my best beloved wife, I feare me that this euill cannot be hid, and wee should theretoe shamefully suffer death if that it were knowne. She sayd I shall this worke begin, and I shall make thereof a good end, and feare it not: when the knight saw that shee was so hardy, it caused him to be the more bold, and shee sent for the first knight, and hee came to her anon without any tarrying, to the gate and knocked, and she asked if he brought the C. flozeng, & he said yea, I haue them heere already, then let shee him in, and anon in the entring in her husband killed him, and so hee did the second, and the third, and into one secret Chamber they drew the bodie of them. When it was thus done, the knight sayd vnto his Ladie: O deere wife, if these bodie be found with vs, wee shall die the most shamefull death that can be imagined,

Maisters.

imagined, for it is not possible but that these knights shall bee missed in the Emperours Court, and great search and inquisition shall bee for them made throughout all this City, where they are become. She sayd, sir I haue this worke begun, & shall make thereof a good end, feare not as aforesayde. This Ladie had a Brother, the which had the gouernance of the wealth of the Citie, that on the nights watched in the streetes with his fellowes, shee stood at her gate and called her brother and sayd, O my best Brother, I haue a secret matter, the which in confession I shall shew you, and therefore come a little within: and whē that he was come in, the Lady receiued him friendly, and gaue him wine to drinke and sayd, my welbeloued brother, this is the cause that I haue called you, for I haue much neede of your counsaile. The Brother answered, say it boldly



### The seven wise

ly vnto mee, and whatsoeuer that I  
maye doe, to my power, that shall be  
at your desire without letting : then  
sayd shee, yester day came in a knight  
in good friendship, but afterwarde  
hee fell into such wordes and variance  
with my husband, that hee slew him,  
and he lyeth in my Chamber : & mine  
owne deere brother, we haue no man  
that we may trust but you, and if the  
bodie be found by vs, wee should die ;  
she made mention but of one, the bro-  
ther said, Deliuere him me in a sacke, &  
I shall beare him to the sea : she hea-  
ring that, was full glad thereof, and  
deliuered vnto him the body of y<sup>e</sup> first  
knight, he took it and went withal a  
good pace & cast him therein. And as  
this was done, he came againe to his  
sister and said, giue me now of the best  
wine, for you are of him quit, and she  
thanked him & went into her Cham-  
ber, as though she had gone for wine,  
and began to crye with an high voyce,  
the

Maisters.

the Knight that was cast into the sea  
is come againe : as her brother heard  
that, he woundred sore and said, giue  
me him I shal see if he will rise again,  
& took the bodie of the second Knight,  
supposing it had beene of the first  
Knight, & went to the sea, & with a  
great stone he drowned him therein: &  
done, he went againe vnto his sisters  
house and said, now fill me a cup with  
good wine, for I haue drowned him  
so deepe, that hee shall neuer come a-  
gaine, she sayd thanks be to God, and  
went again to her Chamber, & fained  
her to fetch wine, & cryed with a loud  
voice, alas woe be to me, he is risen a-  
gaine, and come out of the Sea : & as  
her brother heard that, with a great  
maruaile said, what Diuill is this  
Knight that I haue cast into the wa-  
ter, & notwithstanding is come againe?  
deliuer me him the third time, and I  
shall see if he will come againe : then  
gaue she him the third Knight, which  
hee

## The seven wife

hee beliened had been the first knight  
and wēt without the Citie to a great  
forrest, & made a great fier & cast the  
knight therein, and when he was al-  
most burnt, the Brother went thence  
a little distance to doe his neede, then  
came there a knight that would ride  
to the Citie, where in the Morning  
they should haue a tourney & Jussing,  
and it was cold weather & darke, he  
was not far from the Citie, and when  
he had a sight of fier, he dze to thereto,  
and lighted from his horse and war-  
med him. The watchman came and  
sayd to him, what art thou? y knight  
sayd, I am a gentle knight: then  
spake the watchman & sayd, thou art  
no knight but a Diuel, for first I cast  
thee into the water, the second time  
with a great stone I drowned thee, &  
the third time I haue put thee in this  
fier supposing thou hadst been burnt,  
and yet thou standest here, & then he  
tooke the knight with his horse, and  
cast

Maisters.

cast them both into the fier. After that  
 he went againe to his sister and tolde  
 what had happened him, & said, now  
 bring mee of the best wine, for after  
 that I had burnt him, I found him  
 againe be the fier with a horse, and I  
 haue cast them both in the fier, and by  
 this his sister perceiued well that hee  
 had burnt a Knight of y<sup>e</sup> turney: who  
 anon brought him of the best wine a=  
 boundantly, & after he had wel drun=  
 ken, he went thence. Not long time  
 after there fell a great debate & contē=  
 tion betwixt the knight and his wife  
 in such wise that hee smote her, which  
 had indignation thereof, and waxed  
 angrie & sayd that many might heare  
 it, O wretch wilt thou kill mee, as  
 thou hast done the thre Knights of  
 the Emperors? certain men that hea=  
 ring, laid hands on thē, & brought thē  
 before the Emperoz, and the woman  
 confessed that her husband had slaine  
 thre Knights of the emperors, & hobo  
 he

The seven wise

he took from them three C. florens.  
And as it was thus in troth found,  
both were drawn at an horse taylor, &  
hanged vpon a gallows. Then said  
the Maister to the Emperour, haue  
you vnderstood what I haue sayd?  
Hee answered, right well, I say for  
certaine, that wife was the worst  
woman that might be of all women;  
for first she mooued and stirred him  
vp to murder, and after ward discon-  
red him. The Maister sayd, without  
doubt it shall happen to you worse, if  
you put to death your Sonne by the  
aduise of your wife. The Emperour  
sayd, My Son shall not die this day,  
The Maister hearing that, gaue  
thankes to the Emperour and tooke  
leane, and went his way.

The Seauenth Complaint of  
the Empreſſe.

**W**hen the Empreſſe heard that  
the Son of the Emperour was  
yet liuing: as a mad woman ſhee ran  
to

Maisters.

to the Emperour weeping and cry-  
ing, saying, O vnhappy woman, alas  
what shall I doe? I must needs slay  
my self that am so shamed, and no pu-  
nishment therevpon done: the Empe-  
rour answered, God defend, that you  
should haue mind on such things, but  
suffer a while & you shall haue a good  
end of your cause. She answered, for  
the end shall be euill, for of that shall  
follow to you and to mee great com-  
fusion. The Emperour sayd, leaue of  
such talke, she said, Lord it shall come  
to you and your Son as it happened  
to a King and to his Steward. The  
Emperour sayd, I pray you tell mee  
that example, she sayd, I will glad-  
ly tell it, but I feare mee that yec will  
heare me no moze: For the next day,  
the seventh Maister shall speake and  
saue your Son from the death as his  
fellowes haue done. And the next day  
after that, your Sonne shall speake,  
of whose woordes you shall haue and  
take



### The seven wise

take such ioy and Delectation, that the loue betwixt vs shall bee wholly forgotten and washed away. The Emperour said that it is impossible to me, for I shall neuer forget your loue.

Then said she, O my best beloued Lord, if it please you I will tell you one example, by the which ye shall beware befoze of many perills to come, and especially of your accursed Son, who intendeth to destroy me by his Maisters: the Emperour sayd, tell on you example: and the Emperesse began to tell of this ensuing.

#### The Seuenth Example of the Emperesse.

**T**here was sometime a King, the which loued his wife aboue all things, insomuch that he closed her in a strong Castle, and hee bare the keyes of the Castle himsele, the Ladie was therfoze right heaue, and desolate. Now in farre parts there was a valiant knight, the which  
in



Maisters.

in the night dreamed after this effect:  
He thought that hee sawe one of the  
fairest Queenes that might be, whose  
loue aboute all thinges hee desired to  
obtaine, and that if hee might see her  
walking, hee should cleerly haue  
knowledge of her, by whom toward  
him a great friendship and worship  
should come. To the Queene that  
same night by vision of y<sup>e</sup> said knight,  
the like was also shewed, & yet they  
had of each other no knowledge of  
name, neither of fame : When the  
knight had thus dreamed and seen in  
his sleep, he thought and determined  
in his mind, that his foot should not  
rest, buttill the time he had found that  
Ladie that to him was shewed in his  
dreme: and so tooke his Horse, and  
with him all that was necessarie for  
his iourney, and rode & went through  
diuers Regions and Landes, so long,  
till at the last hee came vnto the same  
Land where that Queene was by  
her

## The seuen wise

her husband closed & kept in a strong Castle. And when this said Knight was come into the same Citie, and by a certain season had therein sojourned: it happened vppon a day as the Knight walked by the Castle, and knew not then that the Queene was therein. shee sate in a window to behold and see the people going by, and among all other shee sawe the same Knight, and knew that hee was the same man that shee had dreamed off: and the Knight by chance lift vp his eyes, and perceined the Ladie sitting in the window, & anon his mind gaue him, that it was shee of whome hee had dreamed, and she began to sing a song of loue. And as he heard that, hee was anon taken with her loue: the Knight from thencefoorth dayly went & walked about the castle beholding it all ouer, if any manner of way hee might get to shew her his mind. The Lady perceiuing þ, wrote a  
Letter

# Maisters

Letter and cast it downe to him. And  
 when he had read ouer þ Letter, and  
 vnderstood the will of the Ladie, hee  
 began to haunt Iusts and Tourna-  
 ments, and so did many great and  
 maruailous acts, that þ same of him  
 came to the King. And as the King  
 heard thereof, he sent after him & sayd  
 to him, Sir knight, I haue heard  
 much honour of you, if it will please  
 you to abide and dwell wth vs, wee  
 shall giue you large gifts & rewards.  
 The knight answered and sayd, O  
 right mightie Prince, I am your ser-  
 uant, would to God that I could doe  
 any seruice to please your Magnifi-  
 cence without taking of any reward,  
 saue one thing before all other I de-  
 sire. The king sayd, shew it vnto me  
 holdly what thing it is: the knight  
 answered, My Lord sthence it hath  
 pleased your Maestie to take me for  
 your Seruant and one of your noble  
 Councell, me semeth that it were very  
 expedient

The seven wise

expedient for both our solaces, that I had a place nigh vnto the wall of the Castle, that I might at all times bee the more ready at your calling when you haue need. Then the King said, I consent to you, make it as ye thinke best. Then went the knight and hired workemen and made a faire lodging by the wales of the Tower, and when it was all ready, he made a couenant with a workman for to make out of his house a secret way into the Court: and when it was made ready after his intent, he killed the workman because he should not discouer it, and so went in to the Queen, and did to her reuerence accordingly, & they talked of many thinges, that at the end he desired to sleepe by her, which she oftentimes denyed, but neuertheless she consented to him. After that, the Queen thought, what shall I doe if I should giue knowledge thereof vnto my husband, thereof would come

two

two evils: the one is my shame, and that peradventure hee should utterly forsake mee, and drive mee out of his land for ever: and the other is, the knight he would slay, for from death he could not escape, and therefore it is better that I be still, and tell not. The knight after that, as often as it pleased him; went in to the Queene, & did his will with her, and shee gaue him a King, the which the king had given to her at her wedding. This knight in every battell and tournament had the Victory, wherefore hee was and stood in great favour with the king, so that hee made him his Steward, and Gouverneur of all his Region and land. It happened vpon a day that the king disposed himselfe to goe on hunting; and commanded his Steward to make him ready on the Morrow for to goe with him, whereto he offered himselfe all ready. And vpon the Morrow after they entred into the  
L 2
forrest,

## The seven wise

forrest, & all this day they chased and followed the wild beasts, that they were so weary, that the King sat him Downe by a fountain to rest, and the knight by the King, and fell on sleepe by him, having the ring vpon his finger, the which the King marked, and knewe. After that the knight perceiued that the King had seene the ring, fawned him sore licke, and sayd. My Lord, I feele my selfe so sore licke, & if I doe not hastily find some remedie therfore by the meanes of Whislicke, I am but a dead man, and therefore I pray you giue me leaue for to goe home, vnto whome he sayd, goe my deere friend in Gods name: he anon got vpo his horse, & hasted him to his house and went to the queene, and gaue her againe the King, and tould her how the King had marked it and seene it on his finger, and prayed her if he made any question of the King, that she should shew it to him. This  
done

Maisters.

done, hee went downe againe to his  
lodging : and anon after ; the King  
came to the Queene , and shee recei-  
ued him right lovingly, and after that  
a little time was passed, the king said,  
my Ladye shewe me where the King  
is that I gaue to you, I desire to see  
it , shee sayd O my Lord, to what in-  
tent at this time desire you to see it :  
then said he, if ye shew it not to me in-  
continent, it shall repent you: then she  
rose vp & went to her chest, & brought  
the King to the King, & when he sawe  
it, he was halfe ashamed, and said vn-  
to her : O howe like is the knightes  
King to this King, which I sawe vp-  
pon his finger, and I beleued that it  
had been mine, and therfore that was  
the cause why I asked it so hastily  
of you. And of this ill suspicion I yeld  
my selfe guiltie against you my deere  
ladie in this behalfe, for the strength of  
the tower deceiued me, for I thought  
that no man might come therein



### The seuen wise

but I my selfe alone: Since sayd, my  
deere Lord wonder not, for one King  
is like another, and workemen make  
seldome any woork, but that other  
make the same, but god forgive it you  
that you haue suspected me, when you  
know the strength of the Tower, and  
the keyes you haue alwaies by you, &  
will trust no man therewith. After  
that the Knight ordained a great di-  
ner, and said to the King, my Lord it  
is so that my Lady and Loue is come  
out of my Countrey, and I haue cau-  
sed a Diner to be made, and I would  
pray you that at this time ye will doe  
me honour, and take such meat as is  
in my house. The King said, I shall  
gladly doe to you that worshippe and  
more. The Knight was glad thereof,  
and by his secret way went to the  
Queene and said vnto her, my La-  
die thus doe, you shall come to my  
house by my priuie way, and cloath  
you in rich cloathing, after the maner

of

of my Country, and you shal sit at the  
table with my king as my Soueraigne  
Ladie, and make him good cheere: she  
sayd, as you will I shall all things  
fulfill. And when the houre of meat  
was come, and the King from the  
Castle was comming towardes the  
Knights house, in the meane time the  
Queene entred by the secret way into  
the knights lodging, and appparelled  
her after the manner of the knights  
Countrey, and when the King was  
entred into the house, she saluted and  
receiued him reuerently, and when  
that the King had beholden her, hee  
demaunded of the Knight what wo-  
man is this so faire: then the knight  
sayd, my Lord it is my Soueraigne  
Ladie that nowe is come out of my  
Country after me, I haue taried long  
in her seruice, then the Knight set the  
King at the table as it behooued, and  
made the Queene to sit by him, and  
the King thought that it was his

## The seuen wife

Queene and said within himselfe, **O** how like is this woman vnto my wife : so the strength of the Tower deceiued him, that he gaue moze faith and credence to the Knights words, than he did to his owne eyes. The Queene began to speake and talke to the king, and to stirre him to eat and drinke and make good cheere, and as the King heard her voice, then he said vnto himselfe, **O** blessed Lord, how like is this woman to my queene in her behauiour, speech, visage, and in all other things and conditions : and alway the strength of the Tower failed him. In the end of the feast, the Knight prayed his Loue to sing a song befoze the king, and shee began to sing a song of Loue : when hee heard that, hee knew her voyce, and thought, is not this my wife ? how may it be she, haue not I the keyes of the Tower my selfe in keeping ? and so all the meat time he sate and stroue within

Maisters.

within himselfe, then at the last hee  
sayd vnto the knight that hee should  
take vp the Table, for hee had some-  
what for to doe, for he was in great  
thought and sore troubled in mind.  
The knight answered and said, my  
Lord ye make no good cheere, ye are  
full of thoughts: and if it please you  
wee shall make to you some sport and  
solace. And the woman said, please it  
you sir king here by vs to tarrie, wee  
shall make to you all the sport and so-  
lace that wee can, like as the Queene  
in her solace & comfort. He sayd, take  
away the table, for I may no longer  
abide, then the knight at the com-  
mandement of the king, tooke vp the  
table and thanked them al, & the king  
went hastily vnto the Castle, sear-  
ching whether the queen were with-  
in or not. And in the meane while the  
Queene went vp by her priuie way, &  
put off her vppermost Vestures, and  
the king found her in the same cloa-  
thing

## The seuen wife

thing that hee left her afoze. when  
as the King was entred and found  
her, he embraced and kissed her, and  
sayd vnto her, this day haue I eaten  
with my knight and with his Loue  
that is come out of his Countrey, and  
sithence I was bozne vnto this day,  
mine eyes haue not scene two so like  
creatures in all thinges, as shee is to  
you, and this meat time I haue been  
so much stirred with diuers thinges,  
that I could no longer abide there,  
but that I must come & search whe-  
ther ye were here or there: then said y<sup>e</sup>  
Queen, sir how might you think that,  
for ye know well that this Tower is  
fast, stronge ynough, and that no bo-  
die can come in nor out without you,  
for ye alone haue alwayes the keyes,  
how were it then possible for me to be  
there: ye find sometime one man like  
another, and therefore ye should take  
some Arguments of misdeeming or  
of suspition, as of late you did of the  
King.

Maisters.

King. The King said, that is true, & therefore I knowledge my selfe guiltie that I haue misdeemed you. After that came to him the knight and said, My Lord, I haue of long time serued your good Grace, and now it is time that I retorne again vnto mine owne countrey, and therfore for all the seruice that I haue done vnto you, I desire of you but one thing to doe for me, that is, that your noble Grace will doe me such honor, as to giue vnto me before the Priest, with your owne hand, in the face of the Church, my Loue, whome I intend to wed, who hath followed me out of farre Countreys, and whome I shall bring thither againe as my lawfull wife, the which thing will be vnto mee great honour and worshippe when I shall come into mine owne Country. The King answered, that petition and more if you desire it of me, will I gladly doe and fulfill. Then the knight prefixed the

The seven wife

the day of Marriage, at which day  
this good king came to the Church  
honourably. The Priest was rea-  
die and stood adorne with his vesti-  
ments, for to solemnize the Matri-  
mony. The knight had already appa-  
relled the queene in his owne house,  
after his Country manner, and had  
ordayned two knightes for to leade  
her to þ Church, they beleeuing that  
it had been his Paramour: and when  
they were in the face of the Church,  
the Priest sayd, who shall giue this  
woman vnto this knight, then the  
king sayd, I shall giue her to mine  
owne knight, and tooke her by the  
hand and sayde vnto her, O good  
woman, you are much like vnto my  
Queene, and therefore I loue you  
the better, and also for that you bee  
my knights wife, and shall bee of  
my house, and so put the Queenes  
hand into the knights hand: and the  
Priest after the maner of the Church  
bound



Maisters.

bound & wedded them together. And when all this was finished and done, the knight sayd vnto the king, Sir, my shippe that I intend to goe in to- wards my Country, is all readie to make sayle, wherefoze I humbly be- seech your most noble Grace, that it will please you for to accompany my wife threunto, and that ye will ad- uertise and informe her to loue mee, and haue me in fauor aboue all other creatures liuing, & the rather for your good exhortation & doctrine. Then the king with a great multitude of people went with them, and accom- panied them vnto the ship: of whose departing to the ship, many of them were sorowfull. The king began to say vnto the Queene, my most deere friend, hearken now well vnto my counsell and follow it, for it shall bee for your profit: my knight hath now heere wedded and done to you all the wooshippe that in him his, wherefoze  
looke

## The seuen wise

looke that ye loue and honour him a-  
boue all earthly creatures, as God  
hath commaunded, and that ye be to  
him true & obedient, and as this was  
said, he deliuered her vnto the knight  
saying, My blessing goe with you  
both, and our Lord keepe and conduct  
you in safetie to your Country. Then  
the knight and the Queene bowed  
and inclined downe their heads to the  
king, and thanked him of all things,  
and they committed him to God, and  
entred into the Ship, and the Mari-  
ners hoisted by their sailes, and saild  
forth afoze the wind, so that within  
a short time the king had lost y sight  
of the Ship, and from thence he went  
hastily to the Castle, and missed the  
Queene, and when he found her not,  
he was mooued in all the parts of his  
body, and sought all about the tower  
and searched till at the last hee found  
the hole of the secret waye that the  
knight had made, and as he saw that  
hee

# Masters.

hee weeping bitterly cryed out & said,  
 Alas, alas, this knight in whome I  
 had so great confidence and trust,  
 hath taken away my wife, was I  
 not a foole, that I gaue moze faith  
 vnto his wordes, than I did to mine  
 owne eyes. Then sayd the Emperesse  
 My Lord, haue yee vnderstood what  
 I haue sayd, the Emperoz sayd, well,  
 in the best wise. Then sayd the Em-  
 peresse, remember how that he trusted  
 the knight, and yet hee deceiued him:  
 In the same maner wise ye haue con-  
 fidence in the Seuen wise Masters &  
 they labour for to destroye mee that  
 am your wife, and ye giue moze faith  
 vnto their wordes, than you doe vnto  
 your owne eyes, for you haue well  
 seen how your son rent and scratched  
 mee, wherfore yet I beare and haue  
 the tokens and markes as yee may  
 see, and also you know well how that  
 your accursed sonne hath shamed me,  
 and yee marke not how they defend  
 him

## The seven wise

him in this folly & falshood, therefore it is to be dread, that it shall happen to you as it did to a king of whome to you I haue spoken. The Emperoz sayd, I beleue mine eye better than their wordes, and therefore I say to you, that to morrow I shall do iustice on him: the next day the Emperour commaunded that his Son should be hanged. Then began againe a great royle and bewayling amongst the common people for the death of the Emperours onely Son. At last when the Maister heard and perceiued that, he ran to the Officers which led him to the gallowes, and said vnto them, my deere friends, I pray you make not ouer great hast, for I thinke this day with the grace of God to saue and deliuer him from perill: and from thence the Maister hasted him towards the Emperours Pallace, and reuerenced him according to his dutie: but the Emperour with great malice and in-

Dig-

Maisters,

dignation answered to him. Neuer-  
more haue ye ioy nor health, for that  
ye haue sent my son home vntaught  
and dumme, whome I deliuered  
vnto you well speaking, therefore  
shall you all be hanged with him: the  
Maister answered, Sir, the time is  
not long betwixt this and to morrow  
noone, then by the grace of God, you  
shall heare him well and wisely spea-  
king, and vnto you the troth saying,  
and that I promise you vpon paine of  
my life (if you will spare him so long)  
if you find it not so. Then sayd the  
Emperoz, if I might heare my sonne  
speake, it shall suffice mee, I would  
desire not longer to liue. Then the  
Maister sayd, ye shall see and heare al  
this, if ye will abide this little time,  
and then shall the dissention be open-  
ly knowne and the strife that hath  
beene betwixt vs and the Emperesse,  
and then it shall be ended. And if that  
ye doenot call againe your sonne, but

¶

put

## The seven wise

put him to death for your wifes  
wordes, it shall happen to you worse  
than it did to a knight that died for a  
little blood that hee sawe his wife  
bleed, to whome after she was most  
unnaturall. Then said the Emperoz,  
that example would I faine heare.  
Then said the Master, let your Son  
bee called againe, and I shall tell you  
so notable an example, that during  
your life, ye may beware of vntruth  
and vnstedfastnesse of women. Then  
the Emperoz said, I shall goe call my  
Sonne again vpon condition that to  
morrow I shall heare my son speake,  
as you haue promised me: the maister  
sayd, Doe that my Lord, for it shall so  
be, and began to tell as followeth,

### The Example of the Seauenth Maister.

**T**here was a knight that had  
a faire young wife, whome he  
loued entirely, insomuch that  
hee could not be out of her sight. It  
happe-

# Maisters.

happened on a time that they played together at Chesse, and the Knight by chaunce held a knife in his hand, and shee playing, fortun'd to smite her hand on the knife, that a little blood began to appeare. When the Knight saw that his wife bled, he sorrow'd much, & was sore affrayd of his wife, that he fel to the ground in a swoond, his wife cast cold water vppon his visage, that he came a little againe to himselfe and sayd lightly, call the Curate with holy sacrament, for I must die: for the blood that I haue seene come out of your finger, hath smitten death to my heart, & Priest came and comforted him. And anon after hee dyed without any tarrying, for whose Death, there was made great sorrow and bewaylings, and specially of his wife, and after that the Obsequies were finished and Doe accordingly, shee went and lay vppon the Graue, and there made the greatest



The seven wise

greatest sorrows in the world, and said she should neuer depart from thence, but as a Turtle Doue she wold for the loue of her husband there abide, and die: then went her friends vnto her and sayd, what auayleth this for his soule, to liue and die heere, it is better that you goe to your house and giue Almes for the loue of God, and that shall more auaille your soule, than in this place to abide. To whom she answered be still, yee are euill Counsellors, consider ye not how I am from him seperated and departed by death for a litle bloud that he saw come out of my hand or finger: and therefore I shall neuer from hence depart. Her friends hearing that, made a little house or lodging nigh vnto the graue, and put therein all thinges that to her was necessarie, and went their wayes, thinking that within a while she should be wearie to bee alone, and so desolate from all companie, that thereby

Maisters.

thereby hee should desire againe the  
companie of people. In the Citie was  
there a Law, that if a trespasser, or an  
offender against the Law were han-  
ged, the Sheriffe all the night should  
watch and keepe the bodye armed:  
and if it hapned that the bodye of him  
hanged were stolled away, the She-  
riffe should lose his Land, and his  
life at the kings pleasure. It happe-  
ned soone after that the Knight was  
dead, a man should be hanged for  
trespasse that he had done, so that the  
Sheriffe after the Law of the land, all  
the night watched by the Gallows,  
that was not far from the Citie, and  
the Churchyard was not far from the  
same: then began the Sheriffe to bee  
so cold, that hee wist not but to die for  
cold, except that hee might speedily  
warme him, it was so seruent cold,  
and so strong a frost: and by chaunce  
hee beholding from thence about him  
and spying a fier in the Churchyard,  
hasted

## The seven wise

hasted him and came thereto, & when he was come, hee called and knocked at the little house : the woman spake and sayd, who is that, that at this time knocketh at the house of this sorrowfull woman, I am the Sherriffe that so much suffereth, that without anon pee let me in, I shall freeze to death, shee sayd, I feare that if I let you in, ye should shew me such wordes that should cause mee to be more heauier, and he sayd, I promise vnto you that I shall say no wordes to your displeasure, then shee let him in, and when hee a while had sitten by the fire, and was well warmed, hee sayd to her, O faire woman, with your licence would I fayne speake but one word vnto you. Shee answered to him, Sir, say what it pleaseth you: he said, O Ladie, you be a faire Gentlewoman, rich, and young, were it not better and more conuenient for you to dwell at home in your house, and

Maisters.

and to giue almes, than to wast and  
 consume your life here with weeping  
 and crying: she said, Sir knight, had  
 I knowne this befoze, you had not  
 come herein, for I say to you, as I  
 haue sayd to other oftentimes, you  
 know well, that my Husband loued  
 me so well, that for a little bloud that  
 he saw me bleid on one of my fingers  
 hee is dead, wherefoze I shall heere  
 die for the loue of him: as the knight  
 heard this, hee tooke leaue and went  
 to the gallowes, & whē he was there  
 come, he saw that y<sup>e</sup> theefe that he left  
 there hanging was stollen & carryed  
 away & began therefoze to waxe hea-  
 uie & fell for sorow & said, woe is me  
 what shall I doe, for I haue lost my  
 life and all my goods: and hee going  
 thus full of sorow and heauines, wist  
 not which way to turne him, or to  
 goe, at the last hee bethought him to  
 goe to that deuout & desolate Ladie,  
 & shew vnto her the heauinesse of his  
 heart

## The seven wise

heare, to wit, if she could giue him any good counsell, And when he was thither come, he called, and she asked the cause of his knocking: then sayd hee, Madame, I am the Sheriffe that was right now with you, & I wold faine shewe you the secrets of my heart, therefore I pray you for the loue of God open the dooze: & he wēt in and sayd to her, O most vertuous Ladie, I am come to haue your counsell and aduise, for you know well the Lawes of the Land are, that whensoever any man is hanged & stolne from off the Gallows, then the Sheriffes life and goods be in the kings hands. Now it happened in the time that I was here with you and warmed me, the theefe is stollen from y Gallows, therefore I pray you for the loue of God, giue me your aduise what is best to doe: she answered I haue compassion vpon you, for by the Law ye haue lost your life and goods to the King.  
Doe

Maisters.

Doe now after my Councel, & ye shal  
neither lose life nor goods: he answered,  
therefore I am to you greatly  
bound, hoping to haue good comfort:  
she sayd, wil you then promise to take  
me to your wife? the knight answered,  
would God that ye were indeed  
so minded, but I feare least ye would  
disdayne so much to humble you vnto  
me that am so poore a knight, she said  
I giue you my will thereto, & he gaue  
her againe his will, and consented to  
be her knight during his life. Then  
sayd shee, you know well that such a  
day my Lord was buried, which  
for the loue of me dyed: take him out  
of his Sepulchre, and doe hang him  
vp in stead of the theefe. The knight  
answered, Ladie your Counsaile is  
good. Then went they together and  
opened the grane and drew him out.  
The knight sayd, how shall we now  
doe, because ere the Theefe was ta-  
ken, two of his vpper Teeth were  
smitten



The seven wise

smitten out, and I feare me, if that  
were perceiued, I should die þ death.  
She sayd to him, Take a stone and  
strike out two of his teeth, the knight  
answered, Madame, that may I not  
doe, for while hee liued, hee was my  
welbeloued fellow, and it should be  
to me a great rebuke, if I should consēt  
to doe so disloyall a deed vnto his bo-  
die being dead: shee answered, for  
your loue shall I do it, & tooke a stone  
and smote out ii. of his teeth, and said  
to the Sheriffe, take him & hang him  
vpon the Gallows like to the theefe.  
The knight sayd, I feare me to do it  
for the Theefe in taking of him, was  
wounded vpon his head, and lacked  
both his Eares. And therefore if it  
were searched and found otherwile,  
it should be to my vtter vndoing.

Then said she, take out your sword  
and make him a great wound vppon  
his head, and cut off his Eares. O  
Madam, God forbid that I doe so to  
the



Maisters.

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the dead bodie that I loued so well  
in his life. Then sayd shee, giue mee  
your sword, and I shall for the loue of  
you doe it, & tooke the sword, & smote  
a manly stroake vpon the dead mans  
fozehead, and cut off both his eares:  
and when he had thus done, she sayd,  
Now take and hange him, without  
companye, and then the Knight an-  
swered yet I feare to hange him, for  
the theefe wanted both his Stones,  
and if that he were searched & found  
without, all our labour were in vain:  
then sayd she, I saw neuer so feareful  
a man seeing the matter so cleare and  
sure, take a knife & cut off his stones,  
and hee answered, that I may not  
doe in any wise, and therefore I pray  
you spare mee, for you know well  
what a man is without his Stones.  
She sayd for the loue of you I shall  
doe it, and tooke the knife in her hand  
and cut out her husbands stones, and  
said to him: Now take the Chiefe,  
thus

The seven wise

thus disfigured, & hang him vp without dread: and they went both together and hung the body vpon the galloes, and so was the Sheriffe deliuered of the kings danger. Then said the Ladie, now ye be quite of all your daungers, and deliuered from all sorowes by my Counsaile, and therfore I will that ye wed mee in the face of the Church: the Knight said, I haue made a bowe that I shall neuer wed other so long as ye liue, which I shall hold: but afterward he sayd, O thou most shamefull and worst woman of all women, who would take thee to his wife: An honourable and a louing Knight was thy Husband, who for a little bloud that hee sawe of thy finger shedde, died. Now hast thou smitten out 2. of his Teeth, thou hast cutt off his eares and his stones, & thou hast made him a great wound in his head, what Diuell would wed thee: and therfore thou shalt neuer  
shame

Maisters.

Shame good man more, I shall ridde thee, and drew his sword, and with one stroke he smote off her head. The Maister sayd, my Lord, haue ye vnderstood what I haue sayd: the Emperour sayd, right well. Amongst all women this was the worst, and the knight rewarded her accordingly, so that she should no more men shame: & the Emperour sayd moreouer, O my good Maister might I once heare my sonne speake, I should haue no care of my life, Then sayd the Maister, to morrow you shall heare him speake afoze you, and he shall shew the troth of all the variance betwixt vs and the Empress as I hope, & tooke his leaue of the Emperour and departed.

How that *Dioclesian* the Emperors Sonne complained on the Empresse: and how hee excused himselfe of her Complainr.

And

The seven wise

**A**Nd after that, all the Masters ro  
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Assembled together, & tooke their  
Counsell how and in what manner  
they should bring the Child out of  
Prison, & lead him to the Pallace, &  
so they went to the Child there as he  
lay in Prison, before the mid-day, his  
will and Counsell for to heare. Un-  
to whom the Child sayd, what ye will  
that shal please me, but in no wise bu-  
sie your selues how I shal answere,  
or what I shal say, for with toy I  
shal answere all things that shal be  
demaunded of me. When the seauen  
Masters heard that, they were right  
glad, and clothed him in Purple, and  
in cloth of Gold, and two Masters  
went before him, and one on his right  
hand, another on his left hand, and  
the other thre followed after him, &  
before them all went 12. men with  
Instruments of musick and brought  
him with great melodie and honore  
to the Pallace, and when the Empe-  
rou

Maisters.

your heard all this Melodie, hee de=  
 maunded what is it : then it was  
 told him by the standers by, saying :  
 Sir Emperoz, it is your sonne which  
 commeth before you, & before all your  
 Lords to speak and excuse him selfe of  
 all things that are laid to his charge.  
 The Emperoz sayd, that is good ty=  
 dings if I might heare my son speak.  
 And when the Child was come vnto  
 the Pallace, he rode to his father, &  
 sayd vnto him, Haile my deere & most  
 Royall father. And when the Em=  
 peroz heard the voice of his Son, hee  
 was so glad, that for ioy he fell down  
 to the earth, but the Child took him  
 vp againe, and when he was come to  
 him selfe, the began the son for to shew  
 his matter, and there came so great  
 a multitude of people, and the ioy &  
 noise of them was so great that the  
 Child could not be heard. The Em=  
 perour considering that, let Monney  
 to bee cast vppon the Streets, that  
 the

The seuen wise

the people therewith should be occupi-  
ed, and auoyded out of the Ballaice,  
that they might the better heare  
the Child speake, but the folke tooke  
no regard at al after the money. The  
Emperour perceiuing that, made to  
bee commaunded silence vppon paine  
of their lues, and when they were all  
still, the Child began to say, O most  
dere Father, befoze that I any thing  
say, I beseech and pray you, that  
the Empresse with all her Chamber-  
mardens may come and be present,  
& the Emperour commanded the Em-  
pres with all her Chambermaides to  
come without stay: she being in great  
feare came with all her maides, & the  
Child commaunded them to stand be-  
foze all the people in a row, that he  
might see them: then sayd the Child  
Sir, lift vp your eyes, and behold the  
Chambermaid that there standeth in  
greene clothing, whom ye know the  
Empresse loueth best aboue all other,  
whome

whome commaund yee to be vncloa-  
thed vnto her naked body afoze vs al,  
to see what she is : the Emperour said  
my deere Son it should shame vs all  
a woman to stand naked befoze vs: he  
sayd, if it be a woman it is my shame,  
and if not, let the shame abide in her.  
When she was vncloathed, they sayd  
all it was a man, and so it appeared  
in the nether parts, whereat greatly  
they woondred.

The Declaration of the complaint of the  
Emperors Sonne on the Emperesse.

**T**hen said the Sonne vnto the fa-  
ther : Behold this Ribaud hath  
many a night lven with your wife  
in your Chamber in adultery, and  
hath defiled your bed, and therefore  
the Emperesse loued him so well, the  
which you knew not.

When the Emperour saw that, he  
was impatient and wroth, so that he  
commaunded that she with the Ry-  
baude should be burnt: the Son sayd,

R

Lord



## The seuen wise

Lord father make no hast of þ iudgement before I haue repproued her of that crime she layd vppon me falsely, and that I haue declared how shee vntruly & falsely hath complayned & lpyed vpon mee: then sayd the father, my deere son I commit all the iudgemente into your hands. The Sonne answered, if she be found false & a lyer the law shall iudge her: but my deere father, when ye sent after mee at the instance of her, then I with my Masters beheld the stars in þ armament and there wee saw, that if I should speak any wordes within seuen daies, I should haue died a shamefull death, and therefore that was the cause I spake not. And where the Emperesse sayd, and put vnto me that I should haue oppressed and raniſhed her, shee lyeth falsely, but shee did her best for to haue caused mee to doe it. And when shee in no wise could bring mee thereto, she tooke me paper, pen, and inke,

# Maisters.

inke, and bad me write the cause that  
 I refused her, and when that I had  
 written that I would not do oz com=  
 mit such great and abhominable sin,  
 and would not my fathers Orchard  
 defile, then beganne shee to teare her  
 cloathes and scratch her visage, that  
 it ran with blood, & cryed with a loud  
 voyce, and layd vnto me the crime,  
 and blame. When the Emperoz hard  
 this, hee beheld her with a fell coun=  
 tenance, & sayd to her in this manner,  
 O thou wretched woman, was it  
 not sufficient to fulfill thy foule and  
 lecherous appetite, thou and thy Ri=  
 baud, but wouldest also haue had my  
 son? Then fel the Empres to the em=  
 perours feet, and she cryed him mercye  
 the Emperour said, O thou cursed &  
 most vnhappy woman, thou askest  
 forgiuenesse, & thou art worthy none  
 to haue, for thou hast deserved to die  
 in thre manner of wayes. The first  
 is, that thou hast done adulterie: the

## The seuen wise

seconde is, that thou hast prouoked  
and stirred my Sonne to sinne, and  
hast to him imputed and layd the  
crime falsely and vntreuly : and the  
thirde, that thou hast euerie day en-  
tised and prouoked me with thy false  
tales to put him to death, and there-  
fore the Law shall haue his course on  
thee, and iudge thee vnto death. The  
sayd the Son, Father ye know well  
that for the leasing that she laied vpon  
mee, I was dayly led vnto hanging,  
but my Maisters with the helpe of  
God hath deliuered me. O my most  
honourable Father, it was sayd vnto  
you by the Emperesse y I would also  
by the helpe of my Maisters depose  
you out of your Empire, and that I  
laboured to destroy you, and to set  
my selfe in your place, should not ye  
then haue sorrowed ? You haue the  
Empire to gouerne, and wherefore  
should I not helpe you my most deere  
Father : for from you I haue my ly-  
uing.

# Maisters.

uring, and I shall hold and repute you  
 for my soueraigne Lord and father  
 during the terme of my life, and I wil  
 not in any māner depriue you of your  
 honour, but I shall labour and busie  
 my selfe about the gouernance of the  
 same, and all your commaundments  
 I shall fulfill in euery thing : but it is  
 in like wise as y<sup>e</sup> father that cast his  
 Son into the sea for to drowne him  
 because he sayd that hee in time com-  
 ming should be his Lord, and yet the  
 Son by the helpe of God was sated  
 and was made a greater Lord than  
 he was, and yet was no hinderance  
 to the father, but profit, also ye shold  
 see & remember that my life & gouer-  
 naunce shall neuer hinder you, but it  
 shall bee to your great solace and ioy.  
 Then sayd the Emperour, blessed be  
 almightie God, and the houre that I  
 euer begat you, and deserued to haue  
 such a Son that I finde so wise and  
 good in all things: tell me now an ex-

### The seuen wise

ample, by the which I may perfectly vnderstand thy wisdom, and that mine heart may the better toy in thee. Then said the Son, first commaund silence to your people, that I bee not letted in my wordes till that I haue done : and when that is ended, giue Sentence with righteousnesse of the law vpon me, and vpon the Emperes. Then commaunded the Emperour silence, and the Childe began to tell in manner as hereafter followeth.

The Example of *Dioclesian* the Emperours Sonne.

**T**here was a Knight which had but one Son that he loued right derely in þ beginning, as ye now all onely haue lored mee, whome hee deliuered to a Maister of farre countreis, to nourish and to learne: the child waxed wise, and profited much, and grew as well in learning as in bodie, & when hee had dwelt with his Maister vii. yeres, his father desired to see him

him, and sent Letters to him that he  
 should come againe into his Country  
 and visit his friends, in like wise as  
 ye haue sent for me. The Child was  
 obedient to his Father, & came at his  
 commandment, at whose comming  
 hee ioyed much, for that hee was as  
 well growne in his members, as in  
 Doctrine, to euerie man he appeared  
 pleasant and gentle. It happened  
 vpon a day, that the Father and the  
 Mother sitting at the table, and the  
 Childe seruing them, a Nightingale  
 came flying afoze the window where-  
 as they sate, & began to sing so sweet-  
 ly that they maruailed, & the Knight  
 sayd, O how sweetly this bird sing-  
 eth, well were him that could vnder-  
 stand his song, & could shew the inter-  
 pretation thereof: then the Son said,  
 My worshipfull Father, the song of  
 the Nightingale I could well declare  
 but I feare your displeasure. The  
 Father sayd, say boldly my Sonne



## The seuen wise

the interpretation of the bird, & the  
ye shall proue whether I shall be an-  
gry or not, but I shall marke well the  
reason of mine anger: and when the  
son heard that, he sayd, the Nightin-  
gale had sayd in his song, that I shall  
become a great Lord that shall be ho-  
noured and worshipped of all men, &  
mainely of my father, the which shall  
bring water for to wash my handes,  
and my mother shall hold the Tow-  
ell. The father sayd, thou shalt  
neuer see the day such seruice of vs to  
haue, nor none such dignitie shall fol-  
low thee, and in great malice and  
woodnesse, hee tooke his son vpon his  
shoulder, and ran to the Sea, and cast  
him in and sayd, lye there the inter-  
preter of the birds song. The Child  
could swim, and swimmied to a Land  
where he was foure dayes without  
meate or drinke: the fift day there  
came a ship sayling, and as the Child  
saw that, hee called vnto the shipmen  
and



Maisters.

and sayd, for y<sup>e</sup> loue of God deliuer me  
from the perill of Death, the shipmen  
saw that it was a faire young man,  
they had compassion on him, & went  
with their boate and fet him aboord,  
& into far Countreys with them they  
led him, & sold him there to a Duke.  
The Child grewe goodly and sayre,  
and the Duke loued him much, and  
had him greatly in his fauour. Upon  
a time the king of that Realm let call  
an assembly of all the great Lords &  
Noble men of his Land to a generall  
Councell. This Duke prepared and  
ordayned him to go to the Counsell, &  
marked the wit and wisdom of the  
Child, and took the Child with him.  
And when they were all gathered &  
assembled before the king in his coun-  
sell, My welbeloued Lords & friends  
sayd the king, will yee wit the cause  
wherefore that I haue called you to  
this Counsell? then sayd they all, we  
be all (soueraigne Lord) at your com-  
maun-

## The seven wise

maundement. Then the King sayd, it is a secret matter that I shall shew you, if that any man can open it, and declare what it signifieth, I sweare & promise vnto him by my crowne, that I will giue to him mine only daughter in mariage, and he shall be my fellow in my Realme during my life, and after my death he shall haue and possesse all my whole kingdome : and the mysterie of the Counsell is this : three Ravens still follow mee where-soeuer that I goe, they leaue me not, but cry with such horrible voices that it is great paine for me to heare them, and to behold their lookes, therefore if there bee any man which knoweth the cause of their following, and can shewe what they meane by their crying, and voyd them away from mee, without doubt I shall fulfill this promise that I haue made. And as the King had thus sayd, there was none found in all the Counsaile that vnder-

Maisters.

vnderstood the cause, or could mooue  
or put away the Ravens. Then said  
the Child vnto the Duke, My Lord  
thinke you that the King will hold  
his promise, if I accomplish his will  
and desire. Then the Duke sayd, I  
think he will performe what he hath  
promised, but will ye that I giue the  
King knowledge of you what ye can  
doe? Then the Child said, I will my  
life set in pledge, and I shall performe  
and make it good what I haue sayd.  
When the Duke heard that, he went  
to the King and sayd. My Lord the  
King, here is a young man that is  
right cunning and wise, the which  
promiseth for to satisfie and fulfill in  
all thinges your desire as touching  
the Ravens, if you will fulfill that  
which you haue promised: the King  
swore by the Crowne of his King-  
dome, that which I haue promised  
in all thinges shall be fulfilled. Then  
brought hee the Childe before the  
King,

## The seven wise

king, and when the king saw him, he spake vnto him, O faire Child, can ye giue answere to my Question: the Child sayd, yea my Lord in the best wise. Your question, wherefore that the Ravens follow you, and horribly call vpon you, I answere thereto: vpon a time it happened two Ravens a Male & a Female, had brought forth betweene them the third Raven, and in that place was so great famine, and scarcitie of all manner of things, that men, beasts and fowles died, and perished for default. The third Raven that time being young in the nest, the Mother left it, seeking where she might best get her lining, and came no more to the nest: the male Raven seeing that, with great penurie and labour fed the young Raven til he was able to flye, and when the deere time was past and gone, then the female Raven came againe to the young Raven, and would hold fellowship and

Maisters.

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companie with him: and as the male  
Rauen saw that, hee would haue dri-  
uen her away, saying thus, that shee  
in his great miserie and necessitie left  
him and his companie, and therefore  
now shee should want his companie  
and fellowship. She alleaged and  
sayd, that shee had in his birth great  
labour and sorow, and suffered pe-  
nurie, and therefore of his companie  
she should rather ioy than the father.  
For this my Soueraigne Lord they  
follow you, asking right Iudgement  
which of them both shall haue the  
young Rauen in their companie, and  
this is the cause of their horrible cla-  
mour and noyse that they make daily  
vpon you. But my Lord had you  
hereupon a right wise sentence gi-  
uen, you should neuer more see them or  
be troubled with their crying. Then  
sayd the king, because that the Mo-  
ther hath left and forsaken the young  
Rauen in his most necessitie, it standeth  
Deth

## The seven wise

deeth with reason and Justice, that she  
shall want & be without his fellow-  
ship : and where she saith, that in the  
bearing and birth of him, shee had  
great paine & trauell, that helpeth her  
not, for the paine was turned into ioy  
as soon as she saw the young Raven  
in þ world. But for þ the Male is the  
cause of production and generation in  
euerie beast, & also because the young  
rauen in his necessitie was sustained &  
fed into the recouering & nozishing of  
his bodie, by the male, therfore I giue  
for a Iudgement and a sentence diffi-  
nitue, that the yong rauen shal abide  
& hold company with the Father, and  
not with the Mother. And when the  
rauens heard this sentēce, with great  
noyse & cry they flew bp into the aire,  
and were no more seen or found in all  
that region. When this was done the  
King demanded of þ yong man what  
his name was ? he answered, I am  
called Alexander, then sayd the King

Masters.

I will haue one thing of you, that ye  
from henceforth shall name and take  
me, and none other for your father,  
for you shall marrie my Daughter, &  
ye shall be possessor of all my Realme.  
The young Alexander abode & dwel-  
led still there with the king, and eue-  
rie man had to him fauour and loue,  
for he began to haunt & exercise him-  
selfe in Justs and Turneyes, wherein  
at all times he had the prize aboue all  
other that were in Egypt, so that his  
Decree or like was not found, & there  
was not so hard nor so obscure a que-  
stion put vnto him, but that hee could  
asswoyle it. At that time there was an  
Emperour named Tyrus, that excel-  
led in gentlenesse, courtesie, and curio-  
sitie of all other Emperours, Kings, &  
Princes in the world, insomuch that  
such fame and noise flew and ran ouer  
the world of it, that whatsoeuer hee  
was that would profite in cunning,  
manners, or behauiour, that he should  
goe



The seven wise

go to the Emperors court. And when Alexander heard that, hee sayd to the king, my most honourable Father & Lord, ye wote well the world is full of fame of the Emperoz, that it is delectable to abide & dwell in his court, wherefore if it please you my Lorde and Father, I would gladly go to his court, that I might be wiser & prōp-ter in manners and behauour than I am. Whereupon answered the King, it pleaseth me right well, but I would that yee take with you plentie of Gold and Siluer and other necessaries so much that ye mine honour there may saue, and that ye may haue also that is to you requisite and necessarie. And also me seemeth it were expedient that before your departing you should marie my Daughter.

Then answered Alexander, will it please you my Lord to spare mee at this time, and at my coming home againe, I shall wed her with all honour

Maisters.

nour as vnto her appertained. The King answered, Sithen it is your will to goe vnto the Emperours Court, I licence you, and thereto I consent. Alexander tooke leaue of the King, and tooke with him of Treasure abundance, and then hee went to the Emperours Court, & when he was come with a faire companie, hee went afoze the Emperoz, & fell vpon his knees, & saluted him, and did him reuerence. The Emperoz rose vp from his seat imperiall and kissed him, and asked him of whence, and what hee was, and wherefoze hee was come: he answered & sayd, I am Son & Heire to the King of Egypt, and am come to do seruice to your most high Maiestie, if it please you to accept of mee. The Emperour sayd that hee was right welcome, and committed him to his Steward, and made him his carner. The Steward ordayned him a faire Chamber, & prouided him all thingz  
D that

## The seven wise

that were necessarie to the same, and Alexander behaued himselfe so well, that in short time he was beloued of all people.

Not long after that, came the kings Sonne of France to doe seruice to the Emperoz, & to learne nurture, him the Emperour receiued honourably, and demaunded his name, and of what kindred he was come: hee answered I am Sonne to the King of France, I haue to name Lodowike your seru-  
uant. Then said the emperoz, I haue made Alexander my Caruer, & ye shall be my Cupbearer that alway ye shall do seruice afoze me at my Table: and commanded his Steward to assigne him a lodging, whome he placed with Alexander in his Chamber: these were so like in stature, in visage, & in condition, that vnneth the one might be discerned from the other, but that Alexander was more cunninger in all his deedes, than was Lodowike  
fo

for he was a feminine man & shame-  
fast, and these two young men loued  
well together.

The Emperour had one onely  
Daughter named Florentine, she was  
right faire and gracious and should  
be his Heire, whome he loued entire-  
ly, shee had a Court by her selfe  
and Seruants to her assigned; to her  
the Emperour euerie day was accu-  
stomed to send from his Table of his  
dainties in token of loue, by Alexan-  
der: insomuch that the Daughter be-  
ganne to haue him maruailously in  
her fauour, because of his wisdom &  
gracious behauiour. It happened vp-  
pon a day Alexander at meate time  
had such businesse, that he serued not  
at the Table, nor none other gaue at-  
tendance for him in his roome: Lodo-  
wike perceiuing that, serued in his  
roome, & as he had serued the empe-  
rour in his last seruice on his knee, the  
Emperour commanded him to beare a

## The seuen wise

Disb to his daughter as he was wont  
to doe, thinking him to bee Alexander:  
then tooke Lodowike the Disb & went  
to the Pallace of y<sup>e</sup> Emperors daugh-  
ter, and saluted her with great reue-  
rence and set the meat before her, but  
till that time he had not seene her: she  
perceiued anon that he was not Alex-  
ander, and sayd to him on this man-  
ner, what is your name, & whose son  
are ye: he answered to her and sayd,  
Madame, I am the Kinges Sonne  
of Fraunce, & my name is Lodowike  
she sayd, I thanke you of your labor.  
& he tooke his leaue & departed: in the  
meane time came Alexander to the ta-  
ble, & they fulfilled their seruice. The  
Dinner done, anon Lodowike went  
to his bed soe sick, and Alexander per-  
ceiuing that, went to his Chamber,  
and sayd to him. O my best beloued  
freend and fellow Lodowike, howe  
is it with you, and what is the Cause  
of your infirmitie: Hee answered  
him

Maisters.

him and sayd, the cause I knowe not,  
but I feele me so sicke that I feare me  
I cannot escape the Death : Alexan-  
der sayd, the cause of your infirmitie  
& disease I know well, for to day as  
yee did beare the meat to the Empe-  
rors Daughter, ye beeheld her visage  
& beautie so feruently, that your heart  
is taken and rauished with her loue.  
Whereupon he answered, O Alexan-  
der, all the Philosophies in the world  
could not moze truely iudge my sicke-  
nesse, but I feare it will be my death.  
Then said Alexander, be of good com-  
fort, and I shall helpe you vnto my  
power, and went vnto the Market,  
& bought with his owne money a faire  
Cloth set with precious Stones, un-  
knowing to Lodowike, and presen-  
ted it in his behalfe vnto the mayden.  
As she saw that, she asked him where  
he had that costly and precious cloth?  
and hee sayd, Madame, of the sonne  
of the most Christian King, who



### The seven wise

sendeth it vnto you, for your loue, for  
he, but for one sight that hee hath had  
of you, is so like that hee lyeth vpon  
his bed vnto the death, and therefore  
if ye suffer him to perish, yee shall ne-  
uer recouer againe your honour.

Then sayd she, O good Alexander,  
would you thus counsaile me that I  
should so loose my virginitye? god de-  
fend that, and hee yee sure Alexander  
that of such messuages yee shall neuer  
more winne thanks of me, therefore  
goe ye out of my sight, and speake no  
more thereof to me. : when Alexander  
heard that, hee did obeysance, and de-  
parted. The next daye Alexander  
went againe to the Citie, and bought  
a Chaplet that was two times more  
in value than the Cloth, & therewith  
he went to the maidens chamber and  
gaue it to her on the behalfe of Lodo-  
wike. And when shee saw that costly  
gift, she said vnto him in this manner:  
I maruaile of you, that so oftentimes  
as



Maisters.

as you haue seene and spoken with  
me, that you haue not done your owne  
errand in speaking for your selfe, but  
for another. Then answered he, O  
Madame, I haue not berne so dispo-  
sed because my birth is not to be com-  
pared with yours, and also it happe-  
ned mee neuer such a case, that my  
heart was so wounded, and hee that  
hath a good fellowe, is bound for to  
do him good and true fellowship, and  
therefore most excellent Princeesse, of  
your most aboundant pitie haue com-  
passion on him, and make him whole  
that you haue so sore wounded to the  
death, that it be not for euer layd vn-  
to your crueltie and hardnes of heart.  
She answered him, goe your way  
for at this time I will giue you none  
answeare thereof, and as hee heard  
that, he tooke his leaue and departed.  
And the thirde day hee went to the  
Market and bought a girdle, that  
was more in value and costlier than  
the

## The seven wise

the Chaplet was, and presented it to her on the behalfe of Lodowike, and when she saw and beheld that so precious, she sayd vnto Alexander, say to Lodowike that he come to my Chamber about the third houre in the night and hee shall finde the doze open: and Alexander hearing that was glad, & went to his fellow and sayd, my best beloued fellow bee of good comfort, for I haue conquered the Mayden to you, and this night I shall bring you vnto her Chamber: & when that was sayd, he started vp as though he was wakened out of his sleepe, & was wel reuiued, and for great ioy hee was made whole: the next night folowing Alexander tooke Lodowike, & brought him vnto the Chamber of the Ladie, with whome hee was in solace & ioy all the night, and from that time forth all her heart was vpon him, so that there was but one loue betwixt them both. And after that, Lodowike

## Masters.

wike bled oftentimes to visite her, so  
 that it came by processe of time to the  
 eares of the Knights of the Court;  
 how that the Emperours Daughter  
 was knowne by Lodowike, and con-  
 spired amongst themselves how that  
 they might therewith find him, and  
 so to take him and slay him. As Alex-  
 ander had knowledge thereof, hee ar-  
 med him to withstand them : and  
 when the Knightes vnderstood that,  
 they fearing Alexander, suffered his  
 fellowes to goe in peace. Alexander  
 many times put himselfe in ieopardie  
 for him, hee not knowing thereof,  
 but the Mayd knew it well. In short  
 time after that, there came letters to  
 Alexander, of the death of the King  
 of Egypt, that hee should hastily come  
 and receiue his Kingdome with ho-  
 nour and ioy, and that shewd he a-  
 non to the mayden and to Lodowike,  
 & also of his departing, whereof they  
 were sorrowfull & heauie : he sayd al-  
 so

## The seuen wise

so vnto the Emperoz, my most honorable Lord, please it you for to vnderstande that I haue receiued Letters of the death of my father, wherefore it behooueth me to go and receiue the Kingdome, & that yee will licence mee to depart, and for all benefits to mee done, I offer my selfe and all my goods, and rather then I shold by my going, any way offend or displease you my Lord, I shall forsake all my realme & al that I haue in the world, & abide with you still. Then said the Emperoz, know yee for certaine, that of your departing I am right heauie, for yee were the best Seruant that was in al my house; but it becommeth not the Emperoz to let his Seruants from their promotions or aduancements, but sooner to promote them to higher & greater honour. Therefore goe you vnto our Treasorer, and hee shall deliuer you as much gold as ye will haue, and in the name of God  
and

Maisters.

and with my blessing goe into your  
Countrey. And thus Alexander had  
leauē of the Emperour, and bad him  
farewel, and many of the Court were  
sorrowfull for his departing, for of all  
hee was beloued. Lodowike with  
the Maiden brought him on his way  
well vii. miles: after that, Alexander  
would not suffer them to goe further,  
then fell they both to the ground with  
great sorrow, and Alexander tooke  
and lift them both by againe from the  
earth, & comforted them with faire &  
sweete wordes & sayd: O Lodowike  
my most best beloued fellow, I warne  
you that the secrets beeing betwixt  
you and my Ladie, yee hide and keepe  
them as priuily as yee may, and take  
good heede to all things, for I wote  
another shall come and be in my steed  
that shall enuie you of the fauour and  
grace that ye stand in with the empe-  
rour, & day and night shall lie in wait  
to take you with a fault, and to put  
you

The seuen wife

you to a rebuke : then answered Lodowicke and sayd, O Alexander I shal beware as much as to me is possible, but how shall I now doe, when I want your companie ? therefore one thing I shall desire of you, that yee take this King of mee for a remembrance. Then sayd he, I shall for the loue of you gladly receiue the King, & yet should I neuer without the King forget you, & so comited them to God. Then they embraced ech other about the necke and kissed, and so departed from other. Not long after the kings Sonne of Spaine named Guido, was receiued of the Emperoz in the roome and place of Alexander, to whome the Steward assigned Alexanders place and Chamber, the which was verie sore against the will of Lodowike, but hee could not amend it. Guido, seeing that Lodowike against his will had him in his fellowship, & non hee had enuie against him, so  
Lo

Maisters,

Lodowike of a long time for feare of  
the sayd Guydo, kept him out of the  
companie of the Maid. Neuertheles  
afterward ouercome with the loue  
of the Mayden, sometime haunted &  
went againe to her as hee before time  
had done : Guydo shortly perceiuing  
the same, waited so long thereon, that  
he knew the troth, & was therefore in  
suertie, that the Mayden was by Lo-  
dowike knowne, & had accompanied  
with her. Upon a time it happened  
that the Emperour stood in his Hall,  
& praysed Alexander of his gentlenesse  
and wisdom. Guydo hearing that,  
sayd, My Lord hee is not so much  
woorthie to bee commended as you  
weene, for hee hath been a long while  
a traytor in your house. Then y<sup>e</sup> Em-  
perour sayd, tell me how? Guydo said,  
yee haue but one daughter onely, the  
which shall be your Heire, and her  
Lodowike hath defiled, and lyeu by,  
through the helpe of Alexander, and he  
goeth



## The seven wise

goeth to her euery night as it pleaseth him. And so soone as the Emperour heard that he was sore moued, & began to be angry; & it happened Lodowike vppon the same time to come through the hal, and as the Emperour sawe him hee sayde, what heere I of thee thou euill & vnttrue body: if it be found and prooued true, thou shalt die the most shamefull death that can be deuised. Lodowike sayd, my Lord the Emperour, what is the cause? Guido answered, I say and depose heere before my lord against thee, that thou hast defiled his onely Daughter, and euerie night thou goest to her, and doest fornication with her, and that in battell I shall prooue and make it good vppon thy body with my bodie. Then sayd Lodowike, I am innocent and not infected with that crime, and falsely thou lvest vpon me, and thereupon I hold thee battell, and I trust to God thy falshood shall come vpon

# Maiſters.

vpon thine owne head. Then the  
 Emperour assigned them the day of  
 Combat. That done Lodowike went  
 vnto the Mayden, and ſhewed to her  
 the cauſe, & the day of battell by the  
 Emperour assigned, and in what ma-  
 ner Guydo had him accused, and ſayd  
 to her: Now it behooueth me to haue  
 your Counsell, or elle I muſt die, for  
 as you know, it had not auailed mee  
 to haue gaine=ſayd the battell, with-  
 out I ſhould haue yelded my ſelfe gil-  
 tie: Guydo is ſtrong and hardy, that  
 his like is none but Alexander, and I  
 am feeble, and therefore if I hold the  
 Battaille againſt him, I am but a  
 dead man, & ſo ye ſhall abide ſhame &  
 rebuke. Then ſaid ſhe, follow my coun-  
 ſayle in that ye miſtruſt your ſelfe, goe  
 haſtily vnto my father and ſay to  
 him, that yee haue receiued Letters,  
 whereby that yee are aſſured that  
 the Lord your father is ſore ſicke, &  
 lieth vpon his death-bed, and deſireth  
 to

## The seuen wise

to see you & speake with your person,  
and to dispose his kingdome and his  
goods before hee depart out of this  
life: and so desire his licence for y<sup>e</sup> loue  
of your father, that you might go vi-  
site him, and that he will prolong and  
lengthen the day of battell, that in y<sup>e</sup>  
meane season you may goe and come:  
& when ye haue obtained his licence,  
as hastily as you may, secretly goe to  
King Alexander, and when yee are  
come to him, take him apart and shew  
him the cause of your coming, and  
require him in this your vtter extre-  
mitie that hee will helpe and saue vs.  
And when Lodowike had heard her  
counsel, it pleased him wel, and he did  
thereafter: his leaue gotten, & longe  
day and respite of the battell prestred  
and assigned, he departed & tooke his  
iourney towarde the Realme of E-  
gypt, and neuer stayd day nor night,  
till hee came vnto King Alexanders  
Castle. And when that King Alexan-  
der

Maisters.

son, er had vnderstanding of his coming, he was very glad and went to meet him, and receiued him honorably, and had wonder of his comming. Then said Lodowike, O my deere Lord and my best beloued friend, my life and my death is in your handes, for as ye sayd to mee before, that I should haue another fellow, y<sup>e</sup> which should lye in waite to espie me, and to destroy mee, without I looked the wiselier to my selfe: so, as long as I might, I abstained me, till I could no longer: but afterwards the Kings Sonne of Spaine made watch so long ouer me, vntill he perceiued the truth. In the end hee accused me vnto the Emperour, so that on the Eight day hereafter from this day, I must be ready & prepare me to fight with him body against bodie: and as ye knowe well, he is a very strong and a hardy man, and I am weake and feeble, and therefore hath Florentine counsa-

The seuen wise

led mee that I should not hide this matter from you, for she knoweth you for a faithfull friend, and that you would not leaue vs in this necessitie. Then said Alexander, is there any body that knoweth of your coming vnto me for this matter, more than Florentine? he answered him and sayd, no creature liuing, for I tooke leaue of the Emperour to go visite my father lying grievously sicke. Then asked Alexander him, what counsell hath Florentine giuen you, howe & in what wise I might helpe you? He said, I am moste constant and faithfull friend. In this wise she hath counselled me, considering that we be like, that you should come and doe the battell with him, and no man shall knowe you but wee, and the battell done, I shall come againe to the Court, and see the point Country. Then he asked what the day should be of the battaile, and he said, Eight days hence. Then said Alexander

Maisters.

Alexander, & I should this day tarie  
 then I cannot come by the day pre-  
 fixed. Wherefore see what I shall do,  
 I haue bidden all my Subiects, that  
 to Morrow they should come to my  
 wedding, and if I should goe: then is  
 the day lost; if I go not and do y<sup>e</sup> bat-  
 ell, then Florentine, and ye are both  
 undone, what thinke ye now best for  
 to doe? When Lodowike heard that  
 he fell to the earth, and began to sigh  
 and sorrow out of measure, saying:  
 sorrow and heavinesse come to me on  
 all sides. Then said Alexander vnto  
 him, be of good comfort, for I shal not  
 forsake you after such a sort, though  
 I should loose my life and kingdome;  
 but harken what I haue thought: in-  
 so much that we are both like, so that y<sup>e</sup>  
 one of vs cannot be knowne from the  
 other and we both together alike, & I  
 am not yet greatly knowne here, but  
 my barons & other folk shall take you  
 for me, therefore heere shall ye abide &  
 tarie.



## The seven wise

tarrie and marry my wife in my stead  
and hold the feast and brydall, and do  
in all things euen as though I were  
there my selfe present, Except when  
as yee come to bedde with my wife  
looke that ye be there true and faith-  
full, and I shall without tarrying go  
and take my horse and ride thither  
whereas the battell shall be, & if god  
giue me the victorie that I may ouer-  
come & banquish your enemye, I shall  
come againe secretly, and yee shall go  
again to your best beloued. This  
done, Alexander bad Lodowike fare  
well, and tooke his iourney toward  
the Emperors Court for to fight and  
doe the battell with Guydo, and Lo-  
dowike tarried in Egypt in the stead  
of king Alexander. And vppon the  
next morning early came Lodowike  
as though it had been king Alexander,  
and there solemnely in the face of the  
Church he espoused Alexanders wife  
and solemnized the marriage feast  
with



Maisters.

with great royaltie of Delycates and  
 delicate meates, plentie of all man-  
 ner of wines, and diuers melodies of  
 Instruments of Musicke, and made  
 great ioy and cheere for the noble men  
 and all other people that were there  
 assembled. And when the night was  
 come he went to bed with the Queene  
 and laid betweene him and her a na-  
 ken Sword, whereof shee had great  
 wonder but nothing shee sayd, and  
 so hee lay with her euery nyght, as  
 longe as Alexander was out. Then  
 rising Alexander at the day that was  
 prefixed and set, came vnto the Em-  
 perour and said, O most Soueraigne  
 Lord it is so, that I haue left my  
 father right sicke, Neuerthelste I  
 am come for to defend my Honour,  
 and my promise to perforce. The  
 Emperour said, ye do right well, & ac-  
 cording to a Noble man, and fortune  
 shall fauour you in your iust and righ-  
 teous quarrell. And when the Em-  
 perours

## The seven wise

perours Daughter vnderstoode that Alexander was come, anon shee sent for him, & when hee was come to her, shee embraced him, and with ioy and gladnesse shee kist him, and blessed the time that shee might see him againe, & demaunded of him where he had left her friend and Louer Lodowike? then hee declared vnto her all the processe, and how hee had left him King in his Realme: and so took his leaue of her, & went to Lodowikes Chamber, & there was no creature that thought otherwise but it was Lodowik, onely except Florentine: the next day following before Alexander went vnto the battaile, hee sayd vnto the Emperour in presence of Guydo, My most redoubted Soueraigne Lord, this Guido hath falsely and vntruely accused mee vnto your Noble Grace, that I should bee of such acquaintance with your Daughter, that should bee vnto the dishonour of your most Noble person

person and hers, & vnto that I swear  
 and affirme by the holy Euangelists,  
 that she was neuer in such manner of  
 wise by me knowen, as he hath allea-  
 ged & insourmed to you, and that this  
 day with the ayd and helpe of God,  
 I shall procure and make good vpon  
 his bodie. Then said Guydo, yet once  
 I say againe, and sweare by the holy  
 Euangelists, & by all that God hath  
 made, that thou hast had knowledge  
 & hast defiled the Emperors Daugh-  
 ter, and that I shall make good vpon  
 thy head. Whereupon they leapt  
 vpon their Coursers, and fiercely ran  
 together with their Spears, that  
 they both brake and shiuered in pec-  
 ces, and then drew their swords and  
 fought so long together, vntill at the  
 last Alexander with great might and  
 strength at one stroke smote off Guy-  
 does head, and sent it vnto the Em-  
 perours Daughter, whee of she was  
 right glad, and bare it to her father,

The seuen wise

and said, Father, behold the head of him that you and me hath so falsely Defamed. When the Emperour perceiued the victorie, anon he sent for Alexander whom he thought to haue been Lodowike and sayd : O Lodowike this day your honour and my daughters yee haue saued, ye shall stand and be to morrow in my grace and fauor, and whatsoeuer he bee that hereafter shall againe defame you, hee shall for euer stand in my indignation. Alexander said, God helpeth & saueeth them that trust in him, & alway weakeeth the bloud indefectiue or innocent : but now we most vndoubted Lord, of one thing I require you: at my departing from my father I left him sore sick, that it will like you for to licence me to goe and see how it standeth with him, and if that hee be any thing amended, I shall incontinent come againe : then the Emperour said, that pleaseeth me well, but yee may in no manner wise leaue

Maisters.

leauue me, for fro henceforth I cannot  
 be without your presence. Alexander  
 tooke leauue of the Emperour, and bad  
 him farewell, and rode againe to his  
 Realme, who when Lodowike sawe,  
 he made great cheere and gladnesse,  
 and friendly receiued him and said, O  
 most true friends of all friends, tel me  
 how you haue done and sped in your  
 iourney and businesse, and what end  
 ye haue brought it to: then said he, go  
 to the Emperour and serue as ye haue  
 done before, for I haue gotten you  
 more grace & fauour of him, than euer  
 yee had before time, and I haue also  
 smit off the head of your greatest ene-  
 my & aduersary. Then said Lodowike  
 yee haue not onely at this time saued  
 my life, but many times heretofore, &  
 which as yet I cannot discerne, but  
 God rewarde you, and so departed:  
 and went againe to the Emperour,  
 and there was no man that knew of  
 the absence of Alexander, saue onely  
 Lodo-

The seuen wise

Lodowike. And when the night was  
come, hee went to bed to the Queene.  
and anon he had with her sweete and  
friendly wooz des and embraced and  
kissed her : then said shee, you haue  
made this time all too long, in that  
ye haue shewed nothing of friendship  
or loue, how may this be : Then said  
hee, wherefore say ye that, shee sayd e-  
uerie night as I was in my bed, you  
haue layd betwixt you & mee a naked  
sword, and yee haue neuer tasted nor  
turned you towards mee more than  
now. And when the King heard that,  
he thought on the truth of his fellow,  
and said vnto her, O my most deere  
Lady and Queene, it was not done  
for any euill will, but for a good pro-  
bation, and for a perpetuall loue : but  
she thought in her selfe, that loue shall  
you neuer more haue of mee, but that  
despight she thought I shall reuenge  
vpon thee. Then there was a knight  
that she afore had a little loue and fa-  
uour

Maisters.

uour vnto, and shee began for to loue  
him more and more, so long till at the  
last they thought and imagined how  
they might destroy and slay the King,  
and therefore they got popson a pay-  
soned the King, so that if hee had not  
been right stronge of complexion, hee  
had dyed thereof, but it wrought in  
him so sore, that it caused him to be a  
most fowle and horrible Leaper, as  
euer was seene vppon the earth. The  
Lords and Noblemen of his realme,  
and the Queene also seeing this, des-  
pised him, and sayd that it behooued  
not a Leaper to raigne ouer vs, for  
hee should not procure nor ingender  
any faire or cleane heires, and so hee  
was deposed of his dignitie Royall,  
and driven out of his Realme. In the  
meane time died y<sup>e</sup> Emperoz of Rome,  
and Lodowike married his Daugh-  
ter, and after that, Lodowikes fa-  
ther dyed, so that Lodowike Raigned  
both Emperoz, and King of Fsaunce  
at



## The seven wise

at once. When King Alexander heard that, he thought in himselfe, now my fellow raignerth together vppon the Empire and Realme of Fraunce, to whom may I go better thā vnto him, for whom many times I haue ventured my life? And vppon a night hee rose vp and made him ready, & tooke with him his staffe and clapper, and went toward the Emperors country, and when he was come nigh vnto the gate, hee sat him among other lazers, expecting the giuing of the almes, and on a suddaine as y<sup>e</sup> Emperoz wēt out of his Pallace, all y<sup>e</sup> pooze lazers beganne to ring their clappers, and the good King Alexander did like to the other, but there was no almes giuen to them. He tarried so long vnto the time that the Emperoz was set, and serued at the table. Then went King Alexander into the gate, and knocked thereat, & the Porter asked who was there? Alexander answered him, I  
am

Maisters,

am a poore Despised man, but for the  
loue of God I require you, that you  
turne not your sight from my Visage,  
and that you will for the reward of  
god doe my message vnto the Empe-  
rour : he asked what is the matter ?  
Alexander said, goe & tell him here is  
a Lazer that is right horrible to see,  
the which prayeth him for the loue of  
god and King Alexander, that he will  
graunt him, this day to eat his almes  
before him vpon the earth in his hall.  
The Porter said, I wounder that ye  
dare desire that of my Lord: for why,  
all the hall is full of Lords and No-  
ble men, and if they behould you, they  
would all abhorre and leaue their  
meate : But for as much as you haue  
required mee so lamentably, for the  
loue of god I shall goe and doe your  
errand whatsoeuer happen thereof,  
and so he went for ward and did his  
message vnto the Emperour. When  
the Emperour hard the Porter name  
Alex.

## The seuen wise

Alexander the King of Egypt, he sayd to his Porter, go bring him afoze me, how horrible soeuer that his Usage bee, and ordaine him a place before me that he may eat his meate and feede in my presence. The Porter brought him anon, & ordained him a place and set him to meate before the Emperour : and when hee was well refreshed, hee sayd vnto one of the Emperours Seruantes, My deere friend doe mee this errand vnto the Emperour, say vnto him that I pray him for the loue of God & King Alexander, that he will send me his Cup of wine. The seruant said, for the loue of God I shall doe it, but I beleue it will not bee, for if yee once drinke of my Lords cup, he will no more drinke of the same, neuerthelesse hee did the errand. Anon as the Emperour heard him name King Alexander, he commaunded his Cup to bee filled of the best wine, and bare it to him, the  
which

Maisters.

which wine when hee had receined,  
 he put it into his bottell, and took his  
 Ring that Lodowike, had giuen vnto  
 him and put it into the Cup, and sent  
 it againe to the Emperour. And when  
 the Emperour saw the Ring, anon he  
 knew that it was the same that hee  
 had giuen to Alexander in friendship  
 when hee departed from him, and  
 thought in his heart, that Alexander is  
 dead, or else this man is maruailously  
 come to the Ring, and commaunded  
 anon that the Lazer shold not depart  
 till the time that he had spoken with  
 him, for in no wise could he haue any  
 knowledge of him, nor yet repute him  
 for Alexander. After that the Din-  
 ner was done and ended, the Empe-  
 rour tooke the sicke man apart, and  
 asked how he came by the Ring? Alex-  
 ander demaunded if ye knew well the  
 Ring? The Emperour said, I know  
 it right well. Alexander sayd, wote  
 yee also vnto whome you haue giuen  
 it?

## The seuen wise

It : The Emperoz said, I wote right well : how is it then sayd Alexander that ye know not me, for I am Alexander, vnto whome ye gaue the same King: when the Emperoz heard that he fell to the ground for sorow, & tare his robes and cloathes, and with many great sighings & bewailings sayd, O Alexander you are the one halfe of my Soule, where is your goodly and delicate bodie, now so vncleane and pittifully infected, that was so faire and pleasant to behold : he answered, this is happened vnto me for the great fidelitie that you haue done to mee in my bed with my wife, when you laid a naked sword betwixt you and her : wherefore she became wroth and hated me, that she and a knight that afore time she ought loue vnto, haue poysoned mee as you may see, and moreouer they haue dzyuen mee out of my Realme. And when the Emperoz heard that, he for loue took him about

# Maisters,

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about the necke and kissed him, and  
 said, O my most and intierly beloued  
 Brother, I sorrow to see you in this  
 great sicknesse and miserie, I would  
 to god I might die for you, but my  
 most deare friend suffer patiently a  
 little time till that wee haue sent for  
 all the Physitians & wise Maisters  
 in physick to haue their counsell and  
 aduise, if there be any remedy or hope  
 of recouering of your health: and if  
 it be possible to helpe you, wee shall  
 neither spare Empire, Lordship, nor  
 other good temporall, to make you  
 whole and sound. In the meane time  
 he was brought into a faire chamber,  
 richly hanged and appointed of all  
 manner of things that were requisite  
 and necessarie for his ease and health,  
 and in all hast he sent his messengers  
 through all parts of the world, for the  
 most expert Physitians that might be  
 found, Of whome within a moneth  
 after were come and assembled before  
 the



### The seven wise

the Emperour Thirtie, which were right expert & skilfull in that science, to whome the Emperour sayd. My welbeloned maisters I haue a friend that is very grievously infected with a foule Leprosie, whome I would right faine were healed and made as sound as euer he was, sparing neither for gold ne siluer, nor all other goods whatsoener that I haue in all this world, but I would gladly giue it to recouer his health againe. Then answered the Maisters, all that euer is possible to be done by physicke, you shall soone vnderstand after that wee haue seen the person: and forthwith as they sawe him and perceiued the cause of his infirmitie, they iudged the disease incurable for all the Maisters liuing. And when the Emperour heard that, he was right sorrie in his heart, and committed it vnto the helpe of almighty god, calling vnto him religious men and poore people, and other deuout



# Maisters.

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deuout persons, and desired them to  
 pray to god, that he would vouchsafe  
 to make whole his friend the sooner  
 for their good deeds and prayers: and  
 he himselfe with many other fasted &  
 prayed humbly to almighty God for  
 the health of his friend. Upon a day  
 as King Alexander was in his pray-  
 ers, there came vnto him a boye say-  
 ing, if the Emperour will with his  
 owne hands slay his wife & slay which  
 his wife hath borne him at one bur-  
 then, & wash thy body with the blood  
 of them, then thy flesh shalbe as faire  
 and as cleane as the bodies of the lit-  
 tle childre. When king Alexander had  
 heard this, he thought with himselfe,  
 this vision is not to be sweved, for it  
 is sore against nature that any man  
 should slay his owne Sonne for reco-  
 uering of the health of a strange man.  
 The Emperour night and day lay in  
 his prayers with great deuotion,  
 still praying to God for remedy for

The seuen wise

King Alexander. So that at the last  
there came a boyce vnto him & sayd  
how long will yee thus crye and call  
vpon me, when it was openly shewed  
vnto King Alexander how that he  
shold be made whole. The Emperour  
hearing that, went vnto Alexander  
and sayd, Of all friends the best and  
most true, Blessed bee the most high  
God, the which neuer fayleth them  
that call and trust on him: Of whom  
I haue knowledge, that it is shewed  
vnto you, how and in what wise that  
ye may be made whole, wherefore I  
pray you that you will openly shew  
vnto me, that wee may ioye together,  
and if ye need any thing thereto that  
I may doe, I shall fulfill it vnto my  
power, yea & for your health giue all  
that I haue to. Alexander sayd, Sir I  
dare not shew it to you, how that I  
may be cured and healed of my mala-  
die, for it exceedeth, and it is a thing  
against nature for to be done, there-  
fore

Maisters.

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fore I will not shew it to you, for  
bee it I haue great trust & confidence  
in you. The emperor said, Alexander  
trust in mee, for whatsoeuer is possi-  
ble for to be done for the recouering of  
your health I shall do it, and there-  
fore hide nothing from me: then sayd  
Alexander, I haue of God know-  
ledge, that if you will slay your-  
self with your owne hands, and wash me  
in thine bloude, I shall be whole, and  
therefore I haue not shewed it vnto  
you, for mee thinketh it is against na-  
ture, that the father should slay his  
own children for the health of a strange  
man: the Emperour sayd, say not that  
ye be a strange man, for I loue you  
as I loue my selfe, & therefore if I had  
Ten children, I should not spare one  
aloue to haue your health. After that  
the emperour watched and espyed his  
time when the Emperesse and the La-  
dies and Chamberers were out of the  
way, and when it was, he entered  
into

The seven wife

into the chamber where as the Children  
slept, and drew out his knife and  
cut a funder both their throats, and  
gathered the blood into a vessell, and  
then bathed and washed Alexander  
therewith: and when he was bathed,  
his body and face was as faire and  
as cleane as though it had been of a  
younge child. When the Emperour  
had knowledg of his vilage, he killed  
him, saying: O good Alexander, now  
I see you were a sorcerer which  
I have often tried in.

Blesse be god, for I had these  
Children by whome I be holpen and  
made whole, and yet no man knew of  
the death of the Children, save only  
the Emperour and Alexander. And  
when the Emperour saw that Alex-  
ander was perfectly healed, hee sayd  
unto him, I shall ordaine to you an  
honorable compaignie, and ye shall go  
from hence Ten miles, and the next  
day send me a messenger, and let me  
know